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THE

CHINESE EMPIRE:

FORMING A SEQUEL TO THE WORK

ENTITLED

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"RECOLLECTIONS OF A JOURNEY THROUGH TARTARY AND THIBET."

BY M. HUC,

FORMERLY MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC IN CHINA.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1855.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Author of these volumes is already favourably known to the English public, by his "Travels in Tartary and Thibet," but the present work is one of greater interest and importance than the former. M. Huc has enjoyed such opportunities of becoming acquainted with China as have scarcely fallen to the lot of any European before. During the journey here recorded, — a journey through the very heart of the Empire, from the frontiers of Thibet to Canton, — he stood under the immediate protection of the Emperor, travelling in all the pride and pomp of a high Government functionary, attended humbly by Mandarins, and surrounded by a military escort, and he was brought into constant and intimate relation with persons of the highest rank in the country. During a previous residence of no less than fourteen years in various parts of China, he had been in habits of familiar intercourse with all classes, but more especially with the poor, and while labouring in his vocation in obscurity and secresy, had looked into the domestic life, and watched the working of the hidden mechanism of society in that mysterious Empire still so imperfectly known, though extending over a surface greater than that of all Europe,

and comprising a population of one-third of the human race. His knowledge of the institutions, religion, manners, and customs of the Chinese, was not taken on hearsay from the accounts of others, but gathered from actual experience, and he has communicated his knowledge to the reader, not in a heavy formal dissertation, but in a much pleasanter manner, *apropos* to the various incidents of his extraordinary journey. It will not probably be regarded as matter of complaint that this journey, undertaken in such anomalous circumstances, should present some incidents, surprising enough to be received with doubt did they come before us without any guarantee. But the well known and high character of M. Huc — the auspices under which the work has appeared — and the internal evidence of veracity that it everywhere presents, afford sufficient warrant, even for what is most singular and unexpected.

It is to be noted also that on that subject on which, of all others, the statements of a Missionary are usually to be received with hesitation, on the effect, namely, of the labours of himself and his brethren in the conversion of the Chinese, M. Huc betrays no tendency to the customary sanguine exaggeration; and if he has resisted the temptation so often yielded to, of representing the prospects, from missionary labours, in a more favourable light than is warranted by the fact, we may reasonably give him credit for accuracy in cases where his personal wishes and prepossessions are far less, if at all concerned. The narrative is not at all less credible because many scenes of it are as amusing

as a comedy, and often not unlike one in the curious game carried on between the eternal shuffling trickeries of the Mandarins, and the courage, humour, and audacity of the missionaries. In several instances, from the peculiar character of the Chinese, a kind of dashing effrontery afforded the only means of escape from perils to which a more timid and feeble traveller would probably have fallen a victim.

In matters of opinion it cannot be expected that the views of the author should always agree with those of English Protestants; he has of course looked at things with his own eyes, and not with ours, but it is never difficult to make allowance for the effect of the refracting medium through which (as it appears to us) he has regarded matters connected with the interests of his Church. His religion, it may be added, is evidently not worn as a garment, but interwoven with every thought and occurrence of his daily life, and it will therefore often attract the spiritual sympathies of those who may differ most widely from him on doctrinal points.

His account of the Chinese Empire, besides the information and amusement it affords, suggests matter for solemn thought, in the picture it presents of a civilised nation, almost wholly removed from religious influence, "without God in the world," and falling rapidly to decay, from no other cause than that of internal moral corruption. M. Huc mentions the (we believe) unparalleled occurrence of a late Emperor having in an important state document passed in review all the systems of religion known in China (Christianity included), and

formally recommended his people to have nothing to do with any. The whole system of society and government appears to be calculated with as little reference as possible to the moral and spiritual nature of man. As one example, among many others, we may mention the extraordinary idea entertained in China of the responsibility of public officers, making the punishment for misconduct in any department in the inverse ratio of the rank of the offender; clerks and other mere instruments being punished most severely, and the highest officers scarcely at all: thus making it evident that the law takes cognisance only of the mere physical fact, and not of the evil intention, in which the whole moral offence consists.

Christianity alone, we conscientiously believe, can heal this inward corruption, and arrest the downward progress of this mighty nation, now no longer separated from us by almost impassable distance. Not merely the statesman and the merchant, but the humblest among us, are now often connected by strong and tender ties with countries equally remote. A breach too has been made in the hitherto impenetrable barrier surrounding these distant Asiatic Empires. The United States have obtained important commercial privileges in Japan; Russia is striving for the same, and the secluded population of China have come forth to mingle (in California and Australia) in some of the busiest haunts of men, and take part in the newest movements of the time.*

* Recent accounts from Melbourne mention the arrival of Chinese immigrants in such numbers as to cause some serious apprehension on the part of the English residents.

Of the tremendous insurrection that has broken out in the bosom of the Empire itself, as well as of some mistaken ideas entertained concerning it, the author has himself spoken sufficiently.

A word of explanation may be permitted concerning the plural pronoun constantly used by the author, the *nos majesticum* as it is called, not very correctly in this instance, for it is obviously employed by M. Huc, as by many others, rather to avoid the appearance of egotism and veil the individual personality. Since it seemed in some measure characteristic, the translator has not ventured to change it for the more customary singular. But whatever may be thought on this and other trivial points, there is reason to hope from the subject of the work, the means of information enjoyed by the author, and his vivid and dramatic manner of conveying his impressions, that his book will be received in this country with favour, equal to that which has already welcomed it in his own.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

When in a former work we retraced the recollections of our journey in Tartary and Thibet, we were compelled to interrupt our narrative on the frontiers of the Chinese Empire. We expressed, however, in a postscript the wish to complete some day the task that circumstances compelled us then to leave unfinished. We said, "we still have to speak of our relations with the Chinese Mandarins and the tribunals, as well as to cast a glance on the provinces that we traversed, and to compare them with those that we visited on our former journeys through the Celestial Empire." "This chasm," we added, "we will endeavour to fill up, during whatever hours of leisure we may be able to spare from the labours of our holy ministry." *

The present opportunity has seemed extremely favourable for the accomplishment of this design, and, in default of any other merit, our observations on the Chinese will at least have that of being well timed, since we are making them public at an epoch when the

* Recollections of a Journey through Tartary and Thibet.

political situation of this great nation is exciting the most general and lively interest.

This vast Empire, which for so long a time has appeared to be sunk in the most profound political apathy, and which even the warlike operations of the English scarcely seem to have disturbed, — this Colossus, has been suddenly shaken to its very foundations by one of those terrible storms that can scarcely pass over a nation without effecting some change in its ancient forms; which leave behind them sometimes better institution but always much of desolation and ruin.

If the original causes of the Chinese insurrection are almost entirely unknown in Europe, its more immediate occasion is not so. In the first instance, this was an isolated act of highway robbery; then followed the association of several villains of that description, endeavouring to resist the efforts of the Mandarins to repress them, and soon from the very dregs of the population a little army was raised, which began to occasion serious uneasiness to the vice-roy of the province of Kouang-si. At length the captain of this gang of robbers, now become the chief of an armed force, proclaimed himself Generallissimo, called in politics and religion to the assistance of his revolt, summoned around him the secret societies that swarm in the Empire, declared himself the restorer of Chinese nationality, against the usurpation of the Mantchoo Tartar race, assumed the title of Emperor, under the pompous name of Tien-te, (Celestial Virtue,) and denominated himself also the younger brother of Jesus Christ. By means such

as these has an Empire of three hundred millions of men been brought to the brink of destruction.

It may appear scarcely credible that a petty revolt of banditti should have increased to such an extent as to become formidable, and assume a sort of national character; but for those who are acquainted with China and its history it will not seem very surprising. This country has always been the classic ground of revolutions, and its annals are but the narrative of a long series of popular commotions and political vicissitudes. In the period of time between the year 420, when the Franks entered Gaul, and 1644, when Louis XIV. ascended the throne of France, and the Tartars established themselves in Pekin, a period of twelve hundred and twenty-four years, China underwent fifteen changes of dynasty, all accompanied by frightful civil wars.

Since the invasion of the Mantchoo Tartar race, the nation, has appeared, it is true, quite indifferent to the political situation of the country, and altogether absorbed in material enjoyments; but in the bosom of this sceptical and avaricious people, there has always remained a powerful and vivacious spark that the Tartar government has never been able to extirpate; secret societies have been formed all over the Empire, the members of which have seen with impatience the Mantchoo domination and cherished the idea of overthrowing it to obtain a national government. These innumerable conspirators were all ready for revolt, and predetermined to support it, let the signal come from whence it might, whether from a discontented viceroy,

or a highway robber. On the other hand the agents of Government had contributed not a little by their conduct to provoke the outbreak. Their unheard-of exactions had filled up the measure of wrong doing and great numbers of the Chinese, some driven by indignation, and others by poverty and despair, joined the ranks of the insurgents, for the sake of even a remote chance of ameliorating their condition, certain that they could not be more oppressed let the new government be as bad as it might.

It is also far from impossible that another cause, but little apparent, may really have exercised considerable influence in the explosion of this Chinese insurrection; namely, the latent infiltration of European ideas put in circulation in the free ports and along the coast by the commerce of the Western nations, and carried by the missionaries into the very heart of the Empire, and to the most remote provinces. The people at large care little enough about what is thought or done by Europeans, whose very existence is all but unknown to them; but the educated classes do at present think much of foreign nations, and cultivate geography with great success. We have often in our journeys met with Mandarins, who had very correct notions of European affairs, and it is these learned men, who give the tone to opinion, and regulate the course of popular thought, so that the common people may very well be following the impulse of European ideas, without knowing so much as the name of Europe.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the insurrection is the religious character that its chiefs have sought

from its very commencement to impress upon it. Every one must be struck with the new doctrines with which the proclamations and manifestoes of the Pretender and his generals have been filled. The unity of God has been distinctly expressed; and around this fundamental dogma have been grouped a number of ideas borrowed from the Old and New Testament. War has been declared at the same time to idolatry and to the Tartar dynasty; for after having defeated the imperial troops, and overthrown the authority of the Mandarins, the insurgents have never failed to destroy the pagodas and massacre the Bonzes.

As soon as these facts became known in Europe, it was eagerly proclaimed everywhere, that the Chinese nation had decided on embracing Christianity, and the Bible Society did not fail to claim the merit and glory of this marvellous conversion.

We do not, however, give the slightest credit to the alleged Christianity of the insurgents, and the religious and mystical sentiments expressed in these manifestoes inspire us with no great confidence. In the second place, it is by no means necessary to have recourse to the Protestant Propaganda to account for the more or less Christian ideas remarked in the proclamations of the revolutionary Chinese. There exist in all the provinces a very considerable number of Mussulmans, who have their Koran and their mosques. It is to be presumed that these Mahometans, who have already several times attempted to overthrow the Tartar dynasty, and have always distinguished themselves by a violent opposition to the Government, would have

thrown themselves with ardour into the ranks of the insurrection. Many of these must have become generals, and have mingled in the councils of Tien-te. It is therefore not wonderful to find among them the doctrine of the unity of God, and other ideas of Biblical origin, though whimsically expressed.

The Chinese have also for a long time had at their command a precious collection of books of Christian doctrine, composed by the ancient missionaries, and which, even in a purely literary point of view, are much esteemed in the Empire. These books are diffused in great numbers throughout all the provinces, and it is more probable that the Chinese innovators have drawn the ideas in question from these sources than from the Bibles prudently deposited by the Methodists on the sea-shore.

The new faith proclaimed by the insurrectional government, though vague and ill-defined, does nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, indicate great progress; it is an immense step in the path that leads to the truth. This initiation of China into ideas so opposed to the scepticism of the masses, and their coarse tendencies, is, perhaps, a symptom of that mysterious march of all nations towards unity, which is spoken of by Count de Maistre, and which, according to the expression which he borrows from the sacred writings, we ought to "salute from afar;"* but for the present it appears to us difficult to see in the chief of this Chinese insurrection anything else than a kind of Chinese Mahomet, seeking to establish his power by fire and

* Soirees de St. Petersburg—Premier Entretien.

sword, and crying to his fanatical partisans—"There is no God but God, and Tien-te is the younger brother of Jesus Christ."

And now, what will be the result of this Chinese insurrection? Will its promoters succeed in their design of establishing a new dynasty, and a new worship, more in harmony with their lately adopted faith? Or will the Son of Heaven have power to re-establish the throne so roughly shaken? The recent course of events is too imperfectly known to us, and appears also too little decisive, to enable us to determine these questions.

Yet, notwithstanding the impossibility of forming any well-grounded opinion on the probable issue of the struggle, the journalists of Europe have declared that were the Tartar dynasty once overthrown, the nation would merely return into its traditional course. It seems to us that this is an error. What is called the Chinese system has really no existence; for this expression can be understood in no other sense than by supposing it opposed to a Tartar system. Now there is not, and never was a Tartar system. The Mantchoo race has, indeed, imposed its yoke upon China, but has had scarcely any influence on the Chinese mind; it has not been able to do much more than introduce some slight modifications into the national costume, and force the conquered people to shave their heads and wear a tail. The Chinese have been governed mostly by the same institutions after as before the conquest; they have always remained faithful to the traditions of their ancestors, and have, in fact, in a great measure,

absorbed the Tartar race, and imposed upon it their own manners and civilisation. They have even succeeded in nearly extinguishing the Mantchoo language, and replacing it by their own. They have nullified the Tartar action on the Empire, by engrossing the greater part of the offices that stand between the governors and the governed. Almost all employments, in fact, if we except the chief military posts, and the highest dignities of the State, have become the exclusive inheritance of the Chinese, who possess, more frequently than the Tartars, the special kinds of knowledge necessary to fill them. As for the Tartars, isolated and lost in the immensity of the Empire, they have retained the privilege of watching over the security of the frontier, occupying the fortified places, and mounting guard at the gates of the imperial palace.

It is not at all surprising that the state of affairs in China should have resisted the Mantchoo invasion, and should not have been in the slightest degree altered by the accession of a foreign dynasty. China differs in this, as in other respects, widely from Europe. The countless revolutions and political convulsions of which it has been the theatre have destroyed nothing, and for the simple reason, that one of the most distinctive features of the Chinese character is a profound, in some measure religious, veneration for ancient institutions, and all things ancient. After every successive revolution this extraordinary people has applied itself to re-constitute the past, and recal the antique traditions, in order not to depart from the rites established by their ancestors, and this is one of the circumstances that may serve to

explain how this nation, which at so early a period attained so remarkable a degree of civilisation, has remained stationary and made no progress for centuries.

Can it be hoped, nevertheless, that the present insurrection will bring any modification in this state of things? We must be permitted to doubt this. It is even probable that the unsympathising disposition of the Chinese towards the nations of the West will remain what it has always been. China is far from being open; and whatever may be said, we believe that our missions have very little to hope there. We must not forget, in fact, that Christianity is in no way concerned in the crisis which the Empire is now passing through. The Christians, too wise and prudent to hoist a political standard, are also too few in number to exercise any sensible influence on the affairs of the country, and they have remained neutral. For this reason they have become equally suspected by both parties, and we fear will be hereafter equally exposed to punishment, which ever side may be ultimately victorious. Should the Mantchoo Government triumph over the insurrection, which already more than once has displayed the cross upon its standards, it will have no mercy on the Christians, and this long struggle will have only served to redouble its suspicions and embitter its wrath; if, on the contrary, Tien-te should gain the victory, and succeed in driving out the ancient conquerors of China, since he claims not only to found a new dynasty, but also a new worship, he will, in the intoxication of victory, break through every obstacle that may oppose his projects.

Thus the conclusion of the civil war may be to the Christians the signal of a new persecution. These terrible trials need not, indeed, induce us to despair of the future prospects of Christianity in China: for we know that the Almighty rules the nations at his pleasure, that He can, when He pleases, bring good out of evil, and that often, where men think all is lost, it is then precisely that all is saved.

In fact, notwithstanding the worship professed by the Chinese for their ancient institutions — if circumstances should at length force the European element to quit its neutrality, and mingle in the affairs of the Celestial Empire, this intervention would probably be the source of remarkable changes, and might gradually produce a complete transformation of China. It may be even, apart from the hypothesis of an intervention, that the new ideas introduced by the revolutionary Chinese will of themselves prove active enough to exercise considerable influence over the destinies of the Empire. Then will regenerated China assume a new aspect, and who knows whether it may not ultimately succeed in placing itself on a level with European nations.

These prospects, uncertain as they are, have encouraged us in the execution of our task. The moment, in fact, when the Tartar-Mantchoo dynasty appears to be tottering to its fall, and China on the eve of a great social and political transformation, is the most suitable for saying what we know concerning this great Empire. Should it be destined to undergo a total change, we shall have contributed to preserve the memory of what

it was, and to rescue from oblivion those ancient customs which have rendered it in our own day an enigma to Europe. Whilst the insurrection is proceeding in its work of demolition, we will labour in construction; and if we can succeed in conveying an exact idea of Chinese society, as it appeared to us in the course of our long peregrinations, our object will have been attained, and we shall have nothing more to say than, as the authors of former days used to do, "*Soli Deo honos et gloria.*"

In our former work, "Recollections of a Journey," we related our travels across the deserts of Tartary, and the incidents of our residence in Thibet, — a residence shortened by the ill-will of Chinese politicians, and finally, our return to China, under the escort of Mandarins.

We are now about to resume our narrative where we then laid it down, that is to say, from the moment when, having just crossed the frontiers of China, we were carried by our conductors towards the capital of Sse-tchouen to be there brought to trial.

This second part of our narrative will turn exclusively upon China, and we will endeavour to correct as much as possible the erroneous and absurd ideas that have prevailed from time immemorial concerning the Chinese people. The efforts made by learned Orientalists, and principally by M. Abel Remusat, to rectify the errors of Europeans on that subject, have not had all the success they merited, for the most contradictory statements are constantly being uttered and printed concerning them. It is not difficult to trace these

errors and contradictions to their sources, in the accounts published at various epochs by those who have penetrated into China, and also by those who have never set foot in it.

When, in the 16th century, the Catholic missionaries arrived, bearing the message of the Gospel to the innumerable nations who form collectively the Chinese Empire, the spectacle that presented itself to their observation was calculated to strike them with astonishment, and even with admiration. Europe, which they had just quitted, was in the convulsions of intellectual and political anarchy. The arts, industry, commerce the general aspect of cities and their population, was totally different from what we see at the present day The West had scarcely entered on the path of material civilisation. China, on the contrary, stood in some measure at the zenith of her prosperity. Her political and civil institutions worked with admirable regularity. The Emperor and his Mandarins were truly the "Father and Mother"* of the people, and by both high and low the laws were faithfully observed. The imaginations of the missionaries could not but be powerfully affected by this immense Empire, with its numerous and orderly population, its fields so skilfully cultivated, its great cities, its magnificent rivers, its fine system of canals, and its entire and prosperous civilisation. The comparison was certainly at that time not to the advantage of Europe, and the missionaries were inclined to admire

* A title by which in China the representatives of authority are designated.

everything they saw in the new country of their adoption.

They often exaggerated what was good in it, and they did not see the accompanying evil, and thus they have often published, in perfect good faith, descriptions of China that were much too flattering to be correct.

Modern missionaries have perhaps fallen into the contrary extreme, Europe has been of late years marching from progress to progress, and almost every passing day has been signalised by some new discovery; China, on the contrary, is in a state of decay; the vices that disfigured its ancient institutions have increased, and whatever good may have been mingled in them has almost wholly disappeared. It has happened, therefore, that the missionaries, setting out with magnificent ideas of the splendour of Chinese civilisation, and finding the country really full of disorder and misery, have come to conclusions respecting it the very reverse of those formed by their predecessors three centuries ago. Under the influence of these sentiments, they have given us pictures of China drawn in gloomy colours. They have, without intending it, exaggerated its evils, as their predecessors had exaggerated what was good; and these different estimates have produced contradictory accounts, which were not likely to throw much clear light on the facts of the case. Mere tourists, too, have of course furnished their contingent to increase the confusion.

Few of the travellers who have been attracted either by curiosity or interest to visit the Chinese shore have not felt the desire to make the fact known to the world, at least through the newspapers. They have seen little

indeed, but that has not prevented them from writing much, and often from slandering the Chinese, for no other reason than that the missionaries formerly over-praised them. Very frequently they have drawn largely in their writings from the accounts of embassies, which unfortunately are regarded as great authorities, although M. Abel Remusat has more than once endeavoured to reduce them to their just value. "The ideas unfavourable to the Chinese," says this skilful and impartial critic, "are not new, but they have been recently diffused and credited. They are partly due to the authors of the Narratives of the Dutch and the two English Embassies."

"The missionaries had boasted so much of Chinese manners and Chinese policy, that in order to say something new on the subject, it was necessary to take the other side. There were also many persons disposed to believe that as they were professedly religious men, they had yielded in their writings to the prejudices of their profession, and the interests of their calling. Lay observers are much less suspected, and in their eyes a missionary is hardly a traveller. How could a man who was neither a Jesuit nor a Dominican fail to be a model of veracity and impartiality?

"Nevertheless, if we consider the matter a little more attentively, we shall see that the travellers, on whom so much reliance has been placed, have not quite as many claims to confidence as has been supposed. No one of them was acquainted with the language of the country, whilst the Jesuits could even write in Chinese, so as to equal the best native *literati*. No one of them ever saw

the Chinese otherwise than on occasions of ceremony, in visits of etiquette, or at festivals strictly regulated by the "Rites," whilst the missionaries made their way everywhere, from the Imperial Court to the most remote provinces, and the most humble villages. These travellers never fail to speak very well of the productions of the country, the manners of the inhabitants, the genius of the Government, for they had under their eyes, while writing their narrative of their travels, the collection of '*Lettres Edifiantes*,' the compilation of Duhalde, and the memoirs of the missionaries. You never find, therefore, an idea of any importance in one that has escaped the others, for they have copied faithfully, and that was the best thing they could do. What could the most able men have said in their place?

"The situation of travellers in China is not usually an enviable one. At their departure from Canton they are imprisoned in closed boats; they are guarded carefully from sight all along the great canal; they are what we may call put under arrest immediately on their arrival at Pekin; and, after two or three official receptions and interrogatories, they are hastily sent back again. As they are not allowed the slightest communication with the outer world, they can really describe from their own knowledge nothing more than the hedge of soldiers by which they have been surrounded, the songs of the boatmen who have accompanied them, the formalities employed by the inspectors who have searched them, and the evolutions of the grandees who prostrated themselves with them before the Son of

Heaven. The history of the whole affair has been given by one of these travellers with as much *naïveté* as precision. He says, 'they entered Pekin like beggars, stayed in it like prisoners, and were driven from it like thieves.'*

"This kind of reception, quite conformable to the laws of the Empire, explains very well the feeling of aversion to China mostly perceptible in these narratives. The writers have enjoyed neither freedom nor pleasure there, but have met with troublesome customs, inconvenient furniture, and dishes that were not to their taste, and bad dinners and bad lodgings will leave unpleasant recollections in the most impartial minds."†

It is assuredly not by traversing the country in this fashion, or by residing some time in a port half Europeanised, that it is possible to become acquainted with Chinese society. For that you must be in some measure identified with the life of the Chinese; you must have lived long among them, and have almost become a Chinese yourself. This is what we did for a period of fourteen years, and we are therefore in a position to speak with confidence concerning an Empire that we had adopted as a second country, and that we entered without thinking of a return. Circumstances have also greatly favoured us in our observations, for we have been enabled to traverse several times the various provinces of the Empire, and compare them with each other, as well as to become initiated into the manners of the

* Account of the Embassy of Lord Macartney.

† Melanges Posthumes, p. 336.

Chinese of the highest class, in the midst of which we constantly lived during our journey from the frontiers of Thibet to Canton.

Our readers must not, however, expect to find in our narrative a great number of those edifying details which have so great a charm for pious and believing souls, and which, perhaps, they had a right to look for in the pages of a missionary.

It is our purpose to address readers of all opinions, and to make China known to all; not merely to preserve the memory of facts connected with our mission. These interesting particulars must be sought in the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," those veritable bulletins of the Church militant in which are recorded the acts of apostles, the virtues of neophytes, and the struggles and sufferings of martyrs. Our object in these volumes has been to describe the theatre of this peaceful warfare, and to make known the populations that the Church of God desires to subject to her rule, and bring within her fold. We hope it will then be more easy to understand the long struggles of Christianity in China, and to appreciate its victories.

One word more. Many things in these volumes will perhaps appear improbable, especially if looked at merely with European ideas, and without placing ourselves—if we may be permitted the expression—in the Chinese point of view.

We trust, however, that our readers will give us credit for veracity, and dispense us from the necessity of employing the language that the celebrated Marco

Polo thought himself obliged to address to his readers, in the beginning of his interesting narrative:—

"And we will put down the things we have seen as seen, and the things we have heard as heard, in order that our book may be honest and true without any lie, and that every one that may read or hear this book may believe it; for all the things it contains are true."*

Paris, 24th May, 1854.

* Recueil des Voyages de la Société de Géographie.—Voyage de Marco Polo, l. i. p. 2.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Arrangements for our Departure.—New Costume.—Departure from Ta-tsien-lou.—Farewell of our Thibetan Escort.—Aspect of the Road.—Suspension-Bridge over the River Lou.—Family of our Conductor.—Palanquin-bearers.—Long Caravans of Porters.—Riot on our account in the Town of Ya-tcheou.—Country assumes definitively a Chinese Character.—Triumphal Arches and Monuments erected in Honour of Virgins and Widows.—Communal Palaces for Travelling Mandarins.—Discovery of a Christian Family.—Aristocracy of Khioung-tcheou.—Introduction and Ravages of Opium in China.—Magnificent Monastery of Bonzes.—Interview with a Christian of the Capital of Sse-tchouen.—Arrival at Tching-tou-fou - - - - Page 1

CHAP. II.

Conversation with the Prefect of the Garden of Flowers.—Lodgings in the Court of Justice.—Invitation to Dinner with the two Prefects of the Town.—Conversation with two Persons of Distinction.—Two Mandarins of Honour, assigned to amuse us.—Solemn Judgment before the assembled Tribunals.—Various Incidents of the Trial.—Report addressed to the Emperor concerning us, and the Emperor's Answer.—Imperial Edicts in favour of Christians, obtained by the French Embassy in China.—Insufficiency of these Edicts.—Appearance before the Viceroy.—Portrait of this Personage.—Despatch of the Viceroy to the Emperor.—Conversation with the Viceroy - 37

CHAP. III.

Tching-tou-fou, the Capital of the Province of Sse-tchouen.—Numerous Visits of Mandarins.—Constitutive Principle of the Chinese Government.—The Emperor.—Curious Organisation of Chinese Nobility.—Central Administration of Pekin.—The Six Sovereign Courts.—Imperial Academy.—Moniteur of Pekin.—Provincial Gazettes.—Administration of the Provinces.—Rapacity of the Mandarins.—Venality of Justice.—

Family of a Magistrate — his two Sons — their Tutor. — Primary Instruction very widely diffused in China. — Chinese Urbanity. — System of Instruction. — Elementary Books.—The Four Classical Books. — The Five Sacred Books. — Arrangements for our Departure. — Last Visit to the Viceroy - - - - - Page 79

CHAP. IV.

Departure from Tching-tou-fou. — Letter thrown into our Palanquin, at the Gate of the Town. — Christianity in China. — Its Introduction in the 5th and 6th Centuries. — Monument and Inscription at Si-ngan-fou. — Progress of Christianity in the 14th Century. — Arrival of the Portuguese in China. — Macao. — Father Mathew Ricci. — Departure of the first Chinese Missionaries. — Prosperity of the Religion under the Emperor Khang-hi. — Persecution under the Emperor Young-tching. — Abandonment of the Missions. — Numerous Departures of the new Missionaries. — Glance at the Present State of Christianity in China. — Motives of Hostility in the Government towards Christians. — Indifferentism of the Chinese in matters of Religion. — Honours paid to us on our Road. — Halt at a Communal Palace. — Trickery on the part of Master Ting. — Navigation of the Blue River. — Arrival at Kien-Tcheou 134

CHAP. V.

Disputes with the Mandarins of Kien-Tcheou. — Intrigues to prevent us from going to the Communal Palace. — Magnificence of this Palace. — The Garden of Sse-ma-Kouang. — Chinese Kitchen. — State of the Roads and Channels of Communication. — Some Productions of the Province of Sse-tchouen. — Use of Tobacco, in Smoking and taking Snuff. — *Tchoung-tching*, a Town of the First Order. — Ceremonies observed by the Chinese in Visits and Conversations of Etiquette. — Nocturnal Apparition. — Watchmen and Criers of the Town. — Fires in China. — The Addition of a Military Mandarin to our Escort. — Tchang-cheou-hien, a Town of the Third Order. — Release of three Christian Prisoners. — Superstitious Practices to obtain Rain. — The Dragon of Rain exiled by the Emperor - - - - - - 180

CHAP. VI.

Bad and dangerous Road. — Leang-chang, a Town of the Third Order. — Disputes between our Conductors and the Mandarins of Leang-chang. — A Day of Rest. — Numerous Visits of Christians. — A Military Mandarin of our Escort compromises himself. — He is excluded from our Table. — Great Trial presided over by the Missionaries. — Details of this singular Trial. — Acquittal of a Christian, and Condemnation of a Mandarin. — Triumphal Departure from Leang-chang. — Servitude and abject State of Women in China. — Their Restoration by Christianity. — Master Ting declares that Women have no Souls. — Influence

of Women in the Conversion of Nations. — Arrival at Yao-tchang. — Hotel of the Beatitudes. — Lodgings in a Theatre. — Navigation of the Blue River. — Plays and Players in China - - Page 225

CHAP. VII.

Temple of Literary Composition. — Quarrel with a Doctor. — A Citizen in the Cangue. — His Deliverance. — Visit to the Tribunal of Ou-chan. — The Prefect and Military Commandant of Ou-chan. — Medical Jurisprudence of the Chinese. — Inspection of Dead Bodies. — Frequent Suicides in China. — Considerations on this Subject. — Singular Character of Chinese Politeness. — The Boundaries which separate the Frontier of Sse-tchouen from that of Hou-pé. — Glance over Sse-tchouen. — Its principal Productions. — Character of its Inhabitants. — Kouang-ti, God of War, and Patron of the Mantchoo Dynasty — Official Worship paid to him. — Wells of Salt and Fire. — State of Scientific Knowledge among the Chinese. — State of Christianity in the Province of Sse-tchouen - - - - - - 268

CHAP. VIII.

Arrival at Pa-toung, a Frontier Town of Hou-pé. — Literary Examinations. — Character of the Chinese Bachelor. — Condition of Writers. — Written Language. — Spoken Language. — Glance at Chinese Literature. — The Celestial Empire an immense Library. — Study of Chinese in Europe. — Embarkation on the Blue River. — Salt Custom-House. — Smuggling Mandarin. — Dispute with the Prefect of I-tchang fou. — A Mandarin wishes to put us in chains. — Systems of Customs in China. — I-tou-hien, a Town of the Third Class. — Amiable and interesting Magistrate of that Town. — Geographical Knowledge of the Chinese. — Narrative of an Arab who travelled in China in the Ninth Century before the Christian Era - - - - 306

CHAP. IX.

Names given by the Chinese to the Kingdoms of Europe. — Origin of the Words China and the Chinese. — Explanation of the various Names that the Chinese give to their Empire. — Good and venerable Prefect of Song-tche-hien. — Portrait of the ancient Mandarins. — Holy Instructions of the Emperors. — A Khorassanian at the Imperial Court. — Details concerning the Manners of the Ancient Chinese. — Causes of the Decay of China. — Means employed by the Mantchoo Dynasty to consolidate its Power. — Foreigners not always excluded from China. — Bad Policy of the Government. — General Presentiment of a Revolution. — Navigation on the Blue River. — Tempest. — Loss of Provisions. — Running aground three Times. — Shipwreck. — The shipwrecked - - - - - 345

CHAP. X.

Chinese City in a State of Siege. — Nautical Sports on the Blue River. — Quarrel between Victors and Vanquished. — Civil War at Kin-tcheou, — Glance at the military Strength of the Chinese Empire. — Discovery of two Soldiers in the Residence of the Missionary. — Description of an extraordinary Review of Troops. — Policy of the Mantchoo Dynasty with respect to Soldiers. — Chinese Navy. — Cause of the Want of Bravery in the Chinese during the last War with the English. — Resources of the Empire for the Formation of a good Army and a powerful Navy. — A Great Reformer needed. — Departure from Kin-tcheou. — Route by Land. — Great Heat. — Journey during the Night by Torch and Lantern - - - - Page 386

THE

CHINESE EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR DEPARTURE.—NEW COSTUME.—DEPARTURE FROM TA-TSIEN-LOU.—FAREWELL OF OUR THIBETAN ESCORT.—ASPECT OF THE ROAD.—SUSPENSION-BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER LOU.—FAMILY OF OUR CONDUCTOR.—PALANQUIN-BEARERS.—LONG CARAVANS OF PORTERS.—RIOT ON OUR ACCOUNT IN THE TOWN OF YA-TCHEOU.—COUNTRY ASSUMES DEFINITIVELY A CHINESE CHARACTER.—TRIUMPHAL ARCHES AND MONUMENTS ERECTED IN HONOUR OF VIRGINS AND WIDOWS.—COMMUNAL PALACES FOR TRAVELLING MANDARINS.—DISCOVERY OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.—ARISTOCRACY OF KHIOUNG-TCHEOU.—INTRODUCTION AND RAVAGES OF OPIUM IN CHINA.—MAGNIFICENT MONASTERY OF BONZES.—INTERVIEW WITH A CHRISTIAN OF THE CAPITAL OF SSE-TCHOUEN.—ARRIVAL AT TCHING-TOU-FOU.

Two years had passed since we bade adieu to the Christians of the Valley of Black Waters. With the exception of a residence of some months in the Lama convent of Koumboum, and in the bosom of the capital of Buddhism, we had been since then perpetually journeying through the vast deserts of Tartary and over the high mountains of Thibet. But these two years of inexpressible fatigue were not sufficient: we were still far from the end of our sufferings. Before we could hope to

enjoy any repose, we had to cross the frontiers of China, and traverse this immense empire from West to East.

Formerly, upon our first entrance on the mission, we had traversed it throughout its entire extent from North to South ; but that was secretly, by stealth, — along bye-paths and in darkness, — pretty much, in fact, in the fashion of bales of contraband goods.

Now our position was altogether different. We were to march openly in broad daylight, keeping the middle of the Imperial high road. Those mandarins, the very sight of whom used to throw us into a cold shiver, and who would have been so extremely happy to put us to the torture, if we had fallen into their hands, had now to make up their minds to serve us for an escort, and to overwhelm us with respect and politeness all along the road.

We were about to become acquainted, in China, with a civilisation extremely unlike that of Europe, but not less complete in its kind. The climate, too, would be no longer the same, and the means of communication would be greatly superior to those of Tartary and Thibet.

No more fear of snow, and rocks, and precipices, — of wild beasts and robbers of the desert. An immense population, provisions in abundance, a richly varied magnificent landscape, luxurious and agreeable, though sometimes whimsical habitations, — this was what we might look for during this new and long stage of our journey. We knew the Chinese, however, too well to feel quite at our ease in this altered position. Ki-chan* had, indeed, given orders that we should be treated kindly,

* Chinese ambassador at the Court of Lha-ssa. See "Recollections of a Journey," &c., vol. ii. p. 285.

but, in fact, we were, after all, given up to the tender mercies of the mandarins. After having escaped a thousand dangers in the wild countries that we had just passed through, we felt no security that we were not to perish of hunger and privation in the very bosom of abundance and civilisation, and we were convinced that our fate would greatly depend on the attitude we should assume from the beginning.

We have observed elsewhere that the Chinese, and especially the mandarins, are strong against the weak and weak against the strong. To domineer over, and crush all around them, is the object they constantly have in view, and to attain it they have an inexhaustible resource in their native cunning and pliability of character. Once allow them to get the upper hand, and it is all over with you; but if you can only succeed in mastering them, you will find them ever after as docile and manageable as children. You may turn and twist them which way you will; but beware of showing yourself weak with them for a moment, for they must be ruled with an iron hand. The Chinese mandarins are pretty much like their own long bamboos. If one can but manage to get hold of them in the right way, they are easily bent double and kept so; but if for a second you let go, they are up again in a moment as straight as ever. It was on a constant struggle, therefore, that we were about to enter — a struggle of every day, and all day long, from *Ta-tsien-loù* to Canton. There was no middle course: we must either submit to their will or make them submit to ours; and we determined to adopt the latter mode of proceeding; for we were by no means inclined to have our long pilgrimage terminate

in some ditch behind the ramparts of a Chinese town *; that was evidently not the martyrdom that missionaries sigh after. In the first place, we had to maintain a long and vehement dispute with the principal mandarin of Ta-tsien-lou †, who would not consent that we should continue our journey in palanquins: he was obliged to give way, however, thanks to the energy and perseverance of our protests. For these two years past we had had to bestride horses of every size, age, and quality, so that our limbs longed at last to stretch themselves out at ease in a palanquin.

After this first triumph, it was necessary to revolt against the decrees of the "Tribunal of Rites," on the subject of the costume that we were to adopt. We had said to ourselves, in every country in the world, and especially in China, clothes play a very important part in the affairs of mankind; and since we have to inspire a salutary fear among the Chinese, it is by no means a

* Our fears were not chimerical. On our arrival at Macao, we learned that a French *Lazariste*, M. Carayon, had been recognised and arrested in one of our missions in the north of China. According to the decree obtained by M. Lagrenée, a missionary could not be condemned and put to death in the same summary manner as before; but was to be sent, *in an honourable manner*, to Macao. The honourable manner in which M. Carayon was sent to Canton, was in chains, and in the company of malefactors; and he was exposed to such cruel ill-treatment on the way, that he died very shortly afterwards.

Another, an Italian missionary, sent there in the same manner, was actually refused the smallest allowance of food, and died of starvation the very day of his arrival at Canton. It would be too long to mention the names of all the missionaries who, quite recently, have fallen victims to the malice of the Chinese; but, so lately as 1851, M. Vacher, of the Foreign Missions, was arrested in the province of *Yun-nan*, and thrown into prison, where shortly afterwards he was suffocated.

† The first town on the Chinese frontier that you meet with in coming from Thibet.

matter of indifference in what way we are to be dressed. We cast aside, therefore, our Thibet costume,—the frightful wolfskin cap, the checked hose, and the long fur tunic, that exhaled so strong an odour of beef and mutton, and we got a skilful tailor to make us some beautiful sky-blue robes in the newest fashion of Pekin. We provided ourselves with magnificent black satin boots, adorned with soles of dazzling whiteness. So far the aforesaid Tribunal of Rites had no objection; but when we proceeded to gird up our loins with red sashes, and cover our heads with embroidered yellow caps, we caused a universal shudder among all beholders, and the emotion ran through the town like an electric current, till it reached the civil and military authorities. They cried aloud that the red sash and the yellow cap were the attributes of Imperial Majesty,—allowable only to the family of the Emperor, and forbidden to the people under pain of perpetual banishment. On this point the Tribunal of Rites would be inflexible, and we must reform our costume accordingly. We, on our side, alleged, that being strangers travelling as such, and by authority, we were not bound to conform to the ritual of the empire,—but had the right of following the fashion of our own country, which allowed every one to choose the form and colour of his garments, according to his own fancy. They insisted,—they became angry,—they flew into a furious passion;—we remained calm and immovable, but vowing that we would never part with our red sashes and yellow caps. Our obstinacy was not to be overcome, and the mandarins submitted—as they ought to do.

The military mandarin of Mussulman origin, whom we had picked up at *Ly-tang* after the decease of the

Pacificator of Kingdoms*, was to escort us to *Tching-tou*, the capital of the province of *Sse-tchouen*. It had been agreed that his mission should end on the frontier, but the mandarins of Ta-tsien-lou found us such crabbed and troublesome customers, that they declined the honour of conducting our caravan. The Mussulman seemed not at all ambitious of it; but, like a true disciple of Mahomed, he knew how to resign himself to his fate, and say calmly, "It is written."

At last we quitted Ta-tsien-lou, to the great satisfaction of the mandarins of the place, who had begun to despair of converting us to their ideas of civilisation. We kept the same escort that we had taken at *Lha-ssa*, only reinforced by some young recruits of the province, commanded by a long, lean corporal, who with his robes tucked up to his middle, his legs naked, a large umbrella in one hand, and a fan in the other, had not, it must be owned, a very strikingly military appearance. As for ourselves, snugly ensconced in our dear palanquins, we were borne rapidly along by four vigorous Chinese bearers, over excavations, rocks, and mud holes, and we soon outstripped our escort, who could by no means vie with the bearers in strength and agility.

After marching five li † we halted; the Chinese set down our palanquin, and invited us to get out in very polite terms, and with a slight smile that seemed to indicate some mystery; and, as soon as we were out, we were agreeably surprised to find behind a rocky hill the Lama Dchiamdchan, with his little Thibetan troop.‡

* See "Recollections of a Journey," vol. ii. p. 398.

† A *li* is the tenth of a French league.

‡ The chief of the Thibet escort that had accompanied us from Lha-ssa to the Chinese frontier. See "Recollections," vol. ii. p. 398.

These honest fellows had come to meet us in order to bid us farewell once more in the manner of their country. They had prepared a collation of Chinese pastry, preserves, apricots, and rice wine, which they had spread on the grass, under the shade of some large trees, and we were soon seated round it in a mood of mingled joy and sadness. We were happy to find ourselves once more together, but our joy was greatly damped by the thought that we were again about to separate and most likely for ever. The escort that we had left behind was not long in coming up, and after having bade adieu to our dear Thibetans and said, "*Au revoir*," we again got into our palanquins.

Au revoir — those words so full of consolation, and which so often dry the tears of parting friends, — how many times had we pronounced them in the sure and certain hope of seeing again one day those to whom they were addressed! How many times in China, in Tartary, in Thibet, in Egypt, in Palestine, had we uttered them to friends whom we were to see no more!

God hides the future from us: He will not permit us to know his designs with respect to us,— and it is in accordance with his infinite goodness that he does not, for there are separations that would kill us if we knew them to be for ever. These Thibetans, to whom we were attached by so many ties, we never saw again; but we shall always retain one great consolation — we can pray to God for these interesting populations, and petition that the missionaries charged to preach the Gospel to them, may succeed in guiding them from the chill and darkness of Buddhism to the light and vivifying warmth of the Christian faith.

The road that we had been following from Ta-tsien-lou had been constantly descending, and we soon found ourselves in a deep and narrow valley, watered by a limpid stream whose banks were fringed by willows and bamboos. On either side arose, almost perpendicularly, lofty and majestic mountains, ornamented with stately trees, and an inexhaustible variety of plants and flowers. Our eyes feasted on the brilliant colours, and the exquisite verdure, and were filled with tears of delight as we inhaled the balmy fragrance of the air: our whole being seemed to expand with rapture. One must have lived for two whole years amidst ice and snow, dreary arid mountains and sandy deserts to feel all the intoxicating charm of such a landscape, and the delicious repose afforded by fresh green grass to an eye wearied by the dead monotonous whiteness of snow.

The road led along the course of the stream. Sometimes we passed from one bank to the other over little wooden bridges covered with turf, and sometimes over large stones thrown into the bed of the rivulet. But nothing relaxed the speed of our bearers; on they went, over every obstacle, and always with the same rapidity, agility, and courage. Now and then they made a short halt to wipe the sweat from their brows and smoke a pipe, and then they resumed their march with redoubled vigour. The narrow valley we were passing through seemed but little frequented; we met only from time to time some parties of travellers, amongst whom it was easy for us to distinguish the vigorous, energetic, and barbarous Thibetan from the pallid cunning-looking faces of the civilised Chinese. On all sides we could see flocks of goats and long-haired oxen, feeding on the mountain pastures,

whilst countless birds warbled amid the branches of the trees.

We passed the first night in a humble and badly provided inn; but as the habitations we had met with in Thibet had not accustomed us to much luxury, we were very well pleased with what we found. The miseries of every kind that we had suffered, had had the effect of rendering us patient under all the trials of life.

On the following day, the road became more wild and perilous. As we advanced, the valley closed in, and became encumbered with enormous masses of rock and great trees that had fallen from the crest of the mountains. The stream that had borne us company the day before, like a faithful friend, now gradually turned away from us, and at last disappeared in a deep gorge. A torrent that we had heard roaring for a long time, like distant thunder, suddenly came in sight from behind a mountain and dashed itself furiously over the rocks. We followed it a long time in its erratic course, and saw it descend from point to point in noisy cascades, or trail its greenish waters like a huge serpent into dark hollows of the mountains. On this day we had no longer the pleasure of gazing on a peaceful and smiling landscape of trees and flowers, but this wild and savage grandeur of nature was not without its charms.

We left these rugged defiles at last behind us, and having crossed a broad valley called *Hoang-tsao-ping* (Yellow Grass Plains), where there is a great variety of culture and vegetation, we arrived at the celebrated bridge of *Lou-ting-khaio*, which we had to cross on foot and at a slow pace. This bridge was built in 1701. It is 192 feet long, and only 10 wide, and is composed of nine enormous iron chains, strongly stretched from one

bank to the other, and on which are laid transverse planks, tolerably well fitted, but moveable. The river Lou, which it crosses, has such a rapid current, that it has been found impossible to build a bridge of any other kind. The two banks are very high, so that when you are in the middle of the bridge, if you look below at the swiftly running waters it is prudent to keep fast hold of the railing; and as the bridge is extremely elastic, it is necessary to walk very slowly, to avoid the risk of pitching over.

On the other side of the river Lou is a little town, where we were received very noisily by a great concourse of people: it was the native place of our Mussulman mandarin, the conductor of the caravan; and it was decided that we were to stop there for a day. It was certainly only fair that the mandarin, who had passed two years at Ly-tang, on the road to Thibet, should be allowed to pass one day with his family. The next morning he presented to us with paternal pride his two children, gorgeously attired, but with faces so flushed and surprised, and arms and legs apparently so stiff and awkward, that we could not help thinking they were lodged for the first time in these fine clothes. We appreciated, however, the courtesy of our Mandarin, gave the little things some sweetmeats and kind words, and caressed them as well as we could, finding that after all they were really very pretty and intelligent; whilst their papa, smiling at one and the other, seemed quite to expand with pleasure.

I wish we could give as good an account of the mandarin's kitchen as of his nursery; but perhaps the worthy man thought the having admired and contemplated his offspring for two hours was enough to satisfy

us, and that we should desire nothing more, for he served us up a most detestable dinner. This suggested to us that we had to do with a person who was inclined to make some little profit out of our supplies on the road, and that if we did not take care it might be likely enough that famine and death would be found at the end of it. We therefore knitted our brows, and gave our conductor to understand that we expected to live rather differently here in China, to what we had done in the mountains of Thibet. Excuses of course were not wanting, but we had made up our minds never to admit any.

Amongst the inhabitants of Lou-ting-khiao the Thibetan element is still observable in manners and costume; but by degrees, as you advance, this mixture disappears, and there remains soon nothing but what is purely Chinese.

We quitted this town early in the morning, and crossed a high mountain, on the summit of which is an immense plateau, with a lake half a league broad in the middle. The paths that lead upward to this plateau are so tortuous and difficult, that the Chinese Itinerary* describes them by saying that they are only fit for birds; and on the following day we were favoured with a by no means pleasing reminiscence of the terrible ascent of the mountains of Thibet. We scaled the *Fey-yué-ling*, "a gigantic mountain which rises almost perpendicularly, and whose peaks are painful to the eyes of the traveller. During the whole year it is covered with snow, and surrounded by clouds that reach to its very foot. The road is frightful, and passes over rocks and chasms; it is one of the most difficult in all China, and

* See what is said of the Chinese Itinerary in the "Recollections."

no place of rest can be found on it." This description, which we borrow from the Chinese Itinerary, is perfectly correct. On this mountain we again found snow, and the sight of it seemed to recall all the horrors and miseries of the journey through Thibet and Tartary. We felt like men who, after having climbed by prodigious exertions out of an abyss, find themselves cast down into it a second time. The bearers of our palanquin performed prodigies of skill, strength, and courage. In the most difficult places, we wished to get out, to afford them a little relief; but they would very seldom allow us to do so, for they felt a pride in climbing like chamois over the steepest rocks, and passing along the edge of the most tremendous precipices, while carrying on their shoulders our heavy palanquins, which seemed always tottering over the abyss. Many times we felt a cold shudder run through our veins, for a single false step would have been sufficient to precipitate us to the bottom of the gulf beneath, and dash us to pieces against the rocks. But nothing can equal the steadiness and agility of these indefatigable bearers; and it is only among the wonderful Chinese that it is possible to find such people. While they are running panting along these terrific roads, their bodies dripping with perspiration, and every moment in danger of breaking their limbs, you may hear them laugh, joke, and pun as if they were seated quietly at their tea-table. Notwithstanding the indescribable fatigues that they undergo, too, they are very badly remunerated. The rate of their wages is fixed at a sapeck a li, which comes to about a halfpenny for a French league. Thus they cannot at the very utmost gain more than five pence a day, and as there are many days in the year, during which it is

impossible for them to exercise their employment, they have not, on an average, more than three pence a day. With that they have to feed, clothe, and lodge themselves, besides keeping enough to furnish them the means of passing the greater part of the night in play and smoking opium.

The food of the common people in China is, it is true, almost incredibly cheap; and the palanquin-bearer is by profession something of a marauder,—besides having every where the privilege of taking up his quarters for the night in a pagoda, an inn, or somewhere about the courts of law. His toilette, too, is not very expensive or complicated, for it consists of nothing more than a pair of drawers reaching to the middle of the thigh, and sandals of rice straw. He generally possesses also a short jacket, but he very seldom puts it more than half on.

The palanquin-bearer is one of the most original types among the Chinese, and we shall often have occasion to study him.

On the summit of the mountain ours allowed themselves a little rest, devoured eagerly some little cakes of maize flour, and smoked several pipes of tobacco. During this time we remained contemplating in silence the great reddish-grey clouds that were sometimes floating below, sometimes rolling down the sides of the mountains, sometimes heaving and dilating themselves as if they were going to rise up to us. Beneath the clouds, decreased to miniature size by the distance, appeared rocks and deep ravines, and foaming torrents, and cascades and carefully cultivated valleys, where large trees of thick dark foliage were clearly marked out against the tender green of the rice fields. The picture

was completed by some scattered habitations, half hidden in tufts of bamboo, whence rose at intervals light wreaths of smoke.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers of the road across this mountain, it is much frequented by travellers, for there is no other way to Ta-tsien-lou, a great place of trade between China and the tribes of Thibet. You meet every moment on these narrow paths long files of porters carrying brick tea, which is prepared at *Khioung-Tcheou*, and forwarded from Ta-tsien-lou to the different provinces of Thibet. This tea, after having been subjected to strong pressure, is made up into bales in coarse matting, and fastened by leathern thongs to the backs of Chinese porters, who carry enormous loads of it. You even see among them old men, women, and children, who go climbing, one after another, up the steep sides of the mountain. They advance in silence, with slow steps, leaning on great iron-pointed sticks, and with their eyes fixed on the ground; and beasts of burden would certainly not endure so well, the constant and excessive fatigue to which these slaves of poverty are subjected. From time to time, he who is at the head of the file gives the signal for a short halt, by striking the mountain with his iron-pointed stick; those who follow him imitate this signal in succession, and soon the whole line has stopped, and each individual placing his stick behind him, so as to relieve himself a little of the weight, lifts up his head, and utters a long whistling sound like a sigh of pain. In this way they endeavour to recover their strength, and get a little air into their exhausted lungs; but after a minute or two's rest, the heavy weight again falls on the back and head,

the body is again bent towards the ground, and the caravan is once more in motion.

Whenever we met these unfortunate tea-porters, they were obliged to stop and lean against the mountain, so as to afford us a free passage. As our palanquin approached, they lifted up their heads and cast on us a furtive and painfully stupid look. And this, said we sadly, is what civilisation, when corrupt and without religious faith, is able to make of man created in the image of God — of man who has been "made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour." The words of the prophet in which he raises so high the dignity of man, recurred involuntarily to our minds; but they sounded like bitter mockery in presence of these poor creatures, degraded to the level of beasts of burden.

Brick tea, and the khata, or "scarf of felicity," are the great articles of trade between China and Thibet. It is scarcely credible what a prodigious quantity of these goods is exported annually from the provinces of *Kan-Sou* and *Sse-tchouen*. These are certainly not absolute necessaries of life; but they are so connected with the habits and wants of the Thibetans, that they cannot now do without them, and they have thus rendered themselves voluntary tributaries of that Chinese Empire, whose yoke weighs so heavily upon them. They might live in freedom and independence in the midst of their mountains, and care nothing about the Chinese, if they could only make up their minds to go without brick tea and scarfs of felicity. But this they will probably not do, for factitious wants are those which weigh most heavily upon us, and from which we have most difficulty in freeing ourselves.

After crossing the famous Fey-yué-ling, which rises on the frontiers of the Central Empire like an advanced post of the mountains of Thibet, we found ourselves once more in China, with its beautiful landscapes, its towns and villages and numerous population; the temperature rose rapidly, and soon the Thibetan horses, which had borne the Chinese soldiers from the garrison of Lha-ssa, became so overcome by the heat that they went along with outstretched necks, flapping ears, and open panting mouths. Several could not endure the change, and died on the road; at which the Chinese soldiers, who had reckoned on selling them for a good price in their own country, became furious, and vented their wrath in imprecations on Thibet and all that it contained.

A little while before we arrived at *Tsing-khi-hien*, a town of the third order, the wind began to blow with such violence that our bearers had the greatest difficulty in keeping the palanquins on their shoulders. But when in the midst of this hurricane we entered the town, we were much surprised to find the inhabitants attending quietly to their customary occupations, and to hear from the master of the inn where we alighted, that this was the usual weather in this part of the country. We consulted our Chinese Itinerary on the subject, and there read, in fact, the following words: —

"At Tsing-khi-hien the winds are terrible: every evening there rise furious whirlwinds, which shake the houses and occasion a frightful noise, as if every thing was going to pieces." It is probable that these atmospheric disturbances are attributable to the neighbourhood of the Fey-yué-ling and its vast and numerous gorges. Since our departure from Ta-tsien-lou, we had travelled pretty quietly, and without exciting much curiosity amongst

the Chinese. But as soon as we had reached the great centre of the population, the sensation we created began to be perceptible.

The estafette who preceded us several stages to announce our arrival, did not fail to blow his trumpet and rouse the inhabitants. The peasants abandoned their field labours, to run and post themselves on the road side to see us pass by. At the entrance of the towns especially, the curious came thronging about us in such numbers that the palanquins could scarcely make their way through the throng. Our bearers vociferated, the soldiers who formed our escort tried to disperse them by dealing out blows right and left with their rattans, and while we advanced, as through the midst of an insurrection, all those thousands of little Chinese eyes were peering into our palanquins with the most eager curiosity. Loud remarks were made, without the smallest ceremony, on the cut of our physiognomies, our beards, noses, eyes, costume,—nothing was forgotten. Some appeared pretty well satisfied with us; but others burst into shouts of laughter, as soon as they caught sight of what seemed to them our burlesque European features. A magic effect was, however, produced by the yellow cap and red sash; those who first discovered them, pointed them out to their neighbours with evident amazement, and their faces immediately assumed a grave and severe expression. Some said that the Emperor had charged us with an extraordinary mission, and that he had himself bestowed on us these Imperial decorations. Others were of opinion that we were European spies who had been arrested in Thibet, and that we were to be tried as a preparatory ceremony to that of having our heads cut off. These various opinions

which we heard expressed all round us, were sometimes amusing, but more frequently, it must be owned, vexatious.

At *Ya-tcheou*, a fine town of the second order, where we stopped after leaving Tsing-khi-hien, there was a real insurrection on our account. The inn where we were lodged, possessed a large and handsome courtyard, round which were ranged the chambers destined to travellers; and as soon as we were installed in those prepared for us, our visitors began to arrive in such crowds that the tumult soon became deafening. As we had rather more desire to rest than to present ourselves as a spectacle for the amusement of the public, we endeavoured to turn them out of doors; and one of us advancing to the threshold of our chambers, addressed to the multitude a few words accompanied by energetic and imperious gestures, which had a complete and instantaneous success. The crowd appeared to be suddenly seized by panic terror, and set off as hard as they could run; and no sooner was the courtyard clear than we had the great gate locked for fear of a second invasion.

But little by little the tumult began again in the street. A sort of murmur was heard among the crowd, and then the noise burst out again as loud as ever. The worthy Chinese were determined to gratify themselves with a sight of the Europeans. They began to knock loudly and repeatedly at our great gate, and at last by dint of violent shaking burst it in, and the living torrent rushed again with impetuosity into the courtyard.

The matter was now becoming serious, and it was evidently important to let them see who was master. By a sudden inspiration we seized a long and thick bamboo, which happened to be lying near the door of the

room, and the poor Chinese, imagining no doubt that we intended to knock them down with it, tumbled over each other in their haste to get away. We then ran to the door of the room occupied by our Mandarin conductor, who, not knowing what to do in the riot, had bethought himself of the safe expedient of hiding himself. But as soon as we had found him, without giving him time to speak, or even to think, we seized him by the arm, clapped on his head his official hat, and dragged him along as fast as we could run to the gate of the inn. Then we thrust into his hands the great bamboo with which we had armed ourselves, and enjoined him to stand sentinel. "If," said we, "a single individual passes that gate, you are a lost man;" and hearing us talk in this grand style, the poor man took it seriously and did not dare to stir. The people in the street burst out laughing; for it was something new to see a military Mandarin mounting guard with a long bamboo at the door of an inn. Every thing remained perfectly quiet up to the time of our going to bed; the guard was then relieved, and our warrior laid down his arms and returned to his room, to console himself by smoking some pipes of tobacco.

Those who do not know the Chinese, will doubtless be scandalised at our behaviour and will blame us severely. They will ask, what right we had to make this Mandarin ridiculous and expose him to the laughter of the people. The right, we answer, that every man has to provide for his personal safety. This triumph, absurd as it seems, gave us great moral power, and we had need of it, in order to arrive safe and sound at the end of our journey. It would be childish or insane to talk of reasoning and acting in China as you would in Europe; the circumstance just related is a trifle, but

we shall find much stronger instances in the course of our narrative.

Our departure from Ya-tcheou was almost imposing. Our demonstration of the evening before had raised us so high in public opinion, that we had not to encounter on our passage the slightest inconvenience. The streets were thronged with people; but their behaviour was civil, almost respectful. They stood aside quietly, to let our palanquins pass, and every body appeared to be earnestly engaged in the study of our physiognomy, which we endeavoured as far as possible to render extremely majestic, and quite in accordance with the "*rites*."

It was the month of June — the finest season for the province of *Sse-tchouen*. The country we were traversing, was rich and admirably varied by hills, plains, and valleys, watered by streams of enchanting freshness. The country was in all its splendour, harvests were ripening all around, the trees were loaded with flowers and fruit, and the exquisite perfume of the air reminded us that we were passing through plantations of lemon and orange trees.

In the fields and on all the paths we found the industrious population of China, constantly busied in trade and agriculture; villages with their curve-roofed pagodas, farms surrounded by thickets of bamboo and banana, inns and houses of refreshment at short intervals along the roads, small tradesmen selling to travellers fruit, fragments of sugar cane, pastry made with cocoa-nut oil, soups, rice, wine, tea, and an infinity of Chinese dainties. All this brought back vividly the recollection of our former travels in the Celestial Empire; but perhaps the strongest reminiscence

was afforded by the powerful odour of musk, with which China and the Chinese are everywhere so much impregnated.

Travellers in remote countries have often remarked, that most nations have an odour which is peculiar to them. It is easy to distinguish the negro, the Malay, the Tatar, the Thibetan, the Hindoo, the Arab, and the Chinese. The country itself even, the soil on which they dwell, diffuses an analogous exhalation, which is especially observable in the morning, in passing either through town or country; but a new comer is much more sensible of it than an old resident, as the sense of smell becomes gradually so accustomed to it as no longer to perceive it.

The Chinese say they perceive also a peculiar odour in a European, but one less powerful than that of the other nations with whom they come in contact. It is remarkable, however, that in traversing the various provinces of China, we were never recognised by any one except by the dogs, which barked continually at us, and appeared to know that we were foreigners. We had indeed completely the appearance of true Chinese, and only an extremely delicate scent could discover that we did not really belong to the "central nation."

We noticed on our way, a great number of monuments of a kind peculiar to China, and which alone would suffice to distinguish this country from all others; namely, triumphal arches erected to widowhood or virginity. When a girl will not marry, in order that she may better devote herself to the service of her parents, or if a widow refuses to enter the marriage state a second time, out of respect to the memory of her deceased husband, she is honoured after death with especial pomp.

Subscriptions are raised for the erection of a monument to her virtue, to which all the relations, and even sometimes the inhabitants of the village or district where the heroine has dwelt, contribute. These arches are of wood or stone, covered with sculptures, sometimes very well executed, of flowers, birds, and fabulous animals. Many of the ornaments and fanciful mouldings would do no discredit to the artists who decorated our finest cathedrals. On the front is usually an inscription in honour of virginity or widowhood, as the case may be; and on the two sides are engraved in small letters the virtue of the heroine in question. These arches, which have a very fine effect, are frequent along the roads, and even in the towns. At Ning-Po, a celebrated seaport in the province of *Tche-Kiang*, there is a long street entirely composed of such monuments, all of stone and of a most rich and majestic architecture. The beauty of the sculptures has excited the admiration of all Europeans who have seen them; in 1842, when the English took the town, there was some talk of their carrying off these triumphal arches, and making with them a complete Chinese street in London. Such an enterprise would have been worthy of British eccentricity, but whether from fear of irritating the people of Ning-Po, or from any other motive, the project was abandoned.

After two days' march through this populous country, we seemed to have quite recovered our former familiarity with it. China entered into us at every pore, and our Tatar and Thibetan impressions gradually faded away. At *Khioung-tcheou*, a town of the second order and pleasantly situated, the inhabitants appeared to be living in the greatest abundance. We were not, as on former occasions, lodged in a public inn, but at a small

palace decorated with great richness and elegance, and where we had only to do with people of exquisite politeness, most strict observers of the *rites* or Chinese etiquette. On our arrival, several Mandarins came to receive us at the door, and introduced us into a brilliant saloon in which we found a luxurious and elegantly served collation. Hotels of this kind are called *koung-kouans*, or communal palaces; they are found from stage to stage all along the road, and are reserved for the use of the great Mandarins, when travelling on public service. Ordinary travellers are rigidly excluded from them. A Chinese family has the office of maintaining each of them in good order, and of making the necessary arrangements when a Mandarin is about to occupy it. The expenses are paid by the governor of the town, and he appoints the domestics for the service of the palace. The koung-kouans of the province of Sse-tchouen are particularly renowned for this magnificence, and they were completely renewed under the administration of Ki-Chan, who was governor of the province for several years, and whose actions all bear the stamp of his noble and generous character.

We were somewhat astonished at first, to find ourselves lodged in this lordly abode, where a splendid banquet was served up to us, and where we were waited on by domestics in rich silk attire.

We talked a good deal with the Mandarins of the town, who had the courtesy to come and visit us; and the result of these conversations was the clear conviction that we had been completely the dupes of the little Mussulman mandarin — the chief of our escort. According to the orders of Ki-Chan, which had been forwarded in writing to the chief tribunal of Ta-tsien-lou, we were to

be lodged every day in the communal palaces, and treated in all things like Mandarins of the first degree. In regulating matters thus, Ki-Chan had doubtless, in the first instance, followed the impulse of his own generosity; but besides this, he had also probably, from a very excusable patriotic pride, wished to give us strangers a high idea of the grandeur of his country; he had wished that we should be able to say that we had been received in China with brilliant hospitality. But Ki-Chan had reckoned without his little Mussulman, who did not particularly care about making the Empire and the Mantchou dynasty shine in the eyes of the two strangers, and who had some little views of his own, connected with our commissariat department. He had an understanding with the courier, who preceded us always by a day's journey, and who declared to the Mandarins of all the towns we passed through, that we had absolutely refused to be lodged in the koung-kouans from some caprice common among the men of our nation, who never could be got to conform to the customs of the central Empire. He requested, therefore that they would let him have the orders for our reception at the various palaces, and he would then undertake to provide for us in a manner more suitable to our taste and wishes. The Mandarins and the keepers of the koung-kouan were, on their side, of course not unwilling to comply with a request that would save them all anxiety and trouble; and if our peculiar tastes led us to prefer lodging at poor inns and living on rice and water, salt herbs and bacon, if wine was too heating and injurious to our Western stomachs, and that we found very poor weak tea agree with us better, they of course could have no objection.

In this manner our cunning little Mussulman found means to maintain us for about a tenth of the sum allowed him for the purpose, and quietly to pocket the balance. This discovery was of the greatest importance to us; for it made us acquainted both with the extent of our rights, and the value of the individual to whose care we had been confided.

When we were about to retire to rest, our attention was attracted by the behaviour of some of the keepers of the palace, who kept hovering about us in what seemed a very mysterious manner. Presently they addressed to us a few words, insignificant enough in themselves, but which expressed their desire to enter into communication with us. At length one of them, after having looked well on all sides, to make sure that he was not perceived, came after us into our room, shut the door, and then kneeling down, made the sign of the cross and asked our blessing. He was a Christian. Soon there came a second and a third, and at last the whole family which had the care of the koung-kouan was assembled round us. They were all Christians; but during the whole day they had not, for fear of compromising themselves before the mandarins, been able to make any demonstration to that effect.

It is impossible to form any idea of the emotions this incident awakened in our minds! The present writer cannot now, after the lapse of six years, recall it without feeling his heart beat quicker and the tears rush into his eyes.

These men were entirely unknown to us, yet we felt immediately towards them like brothers and friends. Their thoughts and feelings were in harmony with ours; we could speak to them with open hearts, for we were

closely united by the bonds of faith, hope, and charity. This inestimable happiness of finding brothers everywhere is only for Catholics. They alone can traverse the earth from north to south and from east to west, and feel secure of finding everywhere some member of the great family.

There is much talk of universal fraternity; but let those who have it in their hearts, and not merely on their lips, exert themselves in the beautiful work of the propagation of the faith. . . .

On the day before our departure we received a great number of visitors, all belonging to the highest society of Khioung-tcheou. Whilst we resided at the mission we had been mostly in communication with the lower classes; in the country with peasants, in the town with artisans, for in China, as everywhere else, it is among the people that Christianity first strikes root. We were happy therefore to have this opportunity of forming an acquaintance with the higher classes of this curious nation. The well bred Chinese are very pleasing in their manners. Their politeness is not fatiguing and tiresome as is sometimes supposed, but has really something fascinating in it, and only falls into affectation with the pretenders to elegance, who know little of refined society. Their conversation is sometimes even intelligent and witty, and though the compliments, and elaborate eulogistic speeches they make one another, are somewhat wearisome at first, you soon become in some measure reconciled to them, by the grace with which they are uttered. There was especially a group of young men amongst our visitors, who excited our admiration; their behaviour was modest, though unconstrained, showing a mixture of timidity

and confidence which suited their age perfectly. They spoke little, and only when they were first spoken to, but showed their interest in the conversation by the animation of their faces and their graceful gestures. Their fans too were managed by our guests with so much elegance and dexterity, that they were quite becoming. Of course we also had on our best manners, in order to show that French urbanity was not inferior to the ceremonious politeness of China.

When we set off again, we remarked that our escort was much more numerous than usual. Our palanquins proceeded between a double line of lancers on horseback, whom it appeared the governor of Khioung-tcheou had given us to protect us from robbers. These robbers were the smugglers of opium, and we were informed that for several years past they had come in great numbers to the province of *Yun-nan*, and even as far as Birmah, to fetch the opium sent to them from India. They came back with their contraband goods quite openly, but armed to the teeth, in order to be able to defy the mandarins who might oppose their passage. Instances were mentioned to us, of murderous combats in which both sides had fought desperately, the one to keep, the other to get, the smuggled goods; for Chinese soldiers are only valiant against robbers and smugglers when they hope to get possession of the booty themselves. When these armed bands of opium traders meet any rich travellers on the road, they seldom fail to do a little more business by attacking and plundering them.

Every body is aware of the unfortunate passion of the Chinese for opium, and of the war this fatal drug occasioned in 1840, between China and England. Its importance in the Celestial Empire is of rather recent

date, but there is no trade in the world the progress of which has been so rapid. Two agents of the East India Company were the first who, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, conceived the deplorable thought of sending to China the opium of Bengal. Colonel Watson and Vice-Pesident Wheeler are the persons to whom the Chinese are indebted for this new system of poisoning. History has preserved the name of Parmentier*; why should it not also those of these two men? Whoever has done either great good or great harm to mankind ought to be remembered, to excite either gratitude or indignation.

At present China purchases annually of the English opium of the amount of seven millions sterling; the traffic is contraband, but it is carried on along the whole coast of the Empire, and especially in the neighbourhood of the five ports which have been opened to Europeans. Large fine vessels, armed like ships of war, serve as dépôts to the English merchants, and the trade is protected, not only by the English government, but also by the mandarins of the Celestial Empire. The law which forbids the smoking of opium under pain of death, has indeed never been repealed; but every body smokes away quite at his ease notwithstanding. Pipes, lamps, and all the apparatus for smoking opium, are sold publicly in every town, and the Mandarins themselves are the first to violate the law and give this bad example to the people, even in the courts of justice. During the whole of our long journey through China, we met with but one tribunal where opium was not smoked openly, and with impunity.

* A distinguished French chemist, who introduced the culture of the potato into France, after the famine of 1769.—TRANSL.

Opium is not smoked in the same manner as tobacco. The pipe is a tube of nearly the length and thickness of an ordinary flute. Towards one end of it is fitted a bowl of baked clay or some other material, more or less precious, which is pierced with a hole communicating with the interior of the tube. The opium, which before smoking is in the form of a blackish viscous paste, is prepared in the following manner: — A portion, of the size of a pea, is put on a needle, and heated over a lamp until it swells and acquires the requisite consistence. It is then placed over the hole in the bowl of the pipe, in the form of a little cone that has been previously pierced with a needle so as to communicate with the interior of the tube. The opium is then brought to the flame of the lamp, and after three or four inspirations the little cone is entirely burnt and all the smoke passes into the mouth of the smoker, who then rejects it again through his nostrils. Afterwards the same operation is repeated, so that this mode of smoking is extremely tedious. The Chinese prepare and smoke their opium lying down, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, saying that this is the most favourable position; and the smokers of distinction do not give themselves all the trouble of the operation, but have their pipes prepared for them.

At Canton, at Macao, and at other ports open to European commerce, we have heard people attempt to justify the trade in opium, by the assertion that its effects were not so bad as was supposed; and that, as with fermented liquors and many other substances, the abuse only was injurious. A moderate use of opium, it was said, was rather beneficial to the feeble and lymphatic Chinese. Those who speak thus, however,

are commonly dealers in opium, and it is easy to suppose that they seek by all possible arguments to quiet their consciences, which can hardly fail to tell them they are committing a bad action. But the spirit of trade and the thirst of gold completely blind these men, who with this exception are generous in their conduct, keep their purses always open to the unfortunate, and are prompt in every good work. These rich speculators live habitually in the midst of gaiety and splendour, and think little of the frightful consequences of their detestable traffic. When from their superb palace-like mansions on the sea shore, they see their beautiful vessels returning from the Indies, gliding majestically over the waves, and entering with all their sails spread into the port, they do not reflect that the cargoes borne in these superb clippers, are bringing ruin and desolation to numbers of families. With the exception of some rare smokers who, thanks to a quite exceptional organisation, are able to restrain themselves within the bounds of moderation, all others advance rapidly towards death, after having passed through the successive stages of idleness, debauchery, poverty, the ruin of their physical strength, and the complete prostration of their intellectual and moral faculties. Nothing can stop a smoker who has made much progress in this habit; incapable of attending to any kind of business, insensible to every event — the most hideous poverty, and the sight of a family plunged into despair and misery—cannot rouse him to the smallest exertion, so complete is the disgusting apathy in which he is sunk.

For several years past, some of the southern provinces have been actively engaged in the cultivation

of the poppy and the fabrication of opium. The English merchants confess that the Chinese product is of excellent quality, though inferior to that of Bengal; but the English opium suffers so much adulteration before it reaches the pipe of the smoker, that it is not in reality as good as what the Chinese themselves prepare. The latter, however, though delivered perfectly pure, is sold at a low price, and only consumed by smokers of the lowest class. That of the English, notwithstanding its adulteration, is very dear, and reserved to smokers of distinction; a caprice which can only be accounted for from the vanity of the rich Chinese, who would think it beneath them to smoke tobacco of native production, and not of a ruinous price; that which comes from a long way off, must evidently be preferable.

"*Tutto il mondo è fatto come la nostra famiglia.*"

It may be easily foreseen, however, that this state of things cannot last; and it is probable that the Chinese will soon cultivate the poppy on a large scale, and make at home all the opium necessary for their consumption. The English cannot possibly offer an equally good article at the same price; and when the fashion at present in their favour, shall have altered, they will no longer be able to sustain the competition. When that happens, British India will experience a terrible blow, that may possibly even be felt in the English metropolis, and then, who knows whether the passion of the Chinese for this fatal drug may not decline. It would be by no means surprising if, when they can procure opium easily and at a low price, they should gradually abandon this degrading and murderous habit.

It is said that the people of London, and many of the great manufacturing towns of England, have been for some time addicted to the use of opium, both in its liquid and solid form; but the circumstance has attracted little attention, though the progress of the habit is alarming. Curious and instructive would it be indeed, if we should one day see the English going to buy opium in the ports of China, and their ships bringing back from the Celestial Empire this deleterious stuff, to poison England. Well might we exclaim in such a case, "Leave judgment to God!"

After quitting the communal palace of Khioung-tcheou we crossed a magnificent plain, in which we saw the Chinese population displaying all the resources of their agricultural and commercial industry. As we advanced the roads became broader, the villages more numerous, and the houses better built and more elegantly decorated. The short garments worn by the people gave way to long robes of state, and the physiognomics of travellers bore the impress of a higher civilisation. Amongst the peasants with their large straw hats and sandals, appeared a great number of Chinese exquisites, with their lounging and affected deportment, playing continually with their fans, and protecting their pale mealy complexions from the sun with little parasols of varnished paper. Every thing announced to us that we were not far off Tchingtou-fou, the capital of the province of Sse-tchouen. Before entering the town our conductor invited us to rest for a short time in a Bonze monastery that we came to on the road. In the mean while, he said he would go himself, according to Chinese ceremonial, to present himself to the viceroy and ask his pleasure respecting us. The superior of the

convent came to receive us, with a profusion of salutations, and introduced us into an immense saloon, where a repast was served of tea, dried fruits, pastry of all colours, fried in sesame oil, which the Chinese call *hiang-you*; that is, odoriferous.

Several monks of the monastery assisted their superior in entertaining us, and keeping up the conversation; but we did not perceive among these Bonzes the frankness and sincerity of religious conviction that we had found among the Lamas of Thibet and Tatary. Their manners were full of courtesy indeed, and their long ash-coloured robes irreproachable; but we could not discover many signs of faith or devotion in their sceptical and cunning faces.

This Bonze monastery is one of the richest and best-maintained in China; and after we had taken tea, the superior invited us to go over it. The solidity of the building and the richness of its decoration attracted our attention; but we admired especially the gardens, groves, and park by which it is surrounded. Nothing fresher or prettier can be imagined. We stopped for some moments on the borders of a large fish-pond, where great numbers of turtle were sporting amidst the broad leaves of the water-lily which floated on the surface of the water. Another pond, smaller than the first, was full of black and red fish; and a young Bonze, whose great ears stuck out comically on each side of his newly shaven pate, was amusing himself by throwing them little pellets of rice-paste; for which they appeared excessively eager, crowding to the surface and opening their mouths to receive them.

After this delightful walk, we were taken to the reception-room of the monastery, where we found several

visitors, and amongst them a young man of lively, easy manners, and remarkable volubility of tongue, whom, before he had spoken many words, we discovered to be a Christian. "You are undoubtedly," said we to him, "of the religion of the Lord of heaven?" For an answer he threw himself on his knees before us and asked our blessing. Such an act, in the presence of the Bonzes and of a crowd of curious persons, indicated both a lively faith and great courage; and in fact he was a man of very strong mind. He began, without the smallest hesitation, to speak of the numerous Christians in the capital, of the quarters of the town in which there were most, and of the happiness it was to him to have met us; he then made a bold attack upon paganism and pagans, defended the doctrines and practices of Christianity, appealed to the Bonzes themselves, rallied them on their idols and superstitions, and summed up with an estimate of the value of the theological books of Confucius, *Lao-tze*, and Buddha. It was a flood of words that seemed as if it would never stop; the Bonzes were disconcerted at such an impetuous attack; the spectators laughed, and looked pleased; and we could not, on our side, help being quite proud of seeing a Chinese Christian proclaiming and defending his faith in public. It was a thing as rare as it was delightful.

During the long monologue of our Christian orator there was frequent mention made of a French embassy that had arrived at Canton, and of a certain great personage named *La-ko-nie* *, who in concert with the

* The Chinese name of M. de Lagrenée. This French embassy had arrived during our long journeys through Tatary, and this was the first time we had heard it mentioned.

Imperial Commissioner *Ky-yn*, had arranged the affairs of the Christians in China. In future it was said there were to be no more persecutions of them; the Emperor approved their doctrine, and took them under his protection, &c., &c.

We did not place any great reliance upon all that, but we endeavoured to make out what it really meant. Having, however, few data to proceed upon, we did not succeed in unravelling all these enigmas; and just as we were about to ask more precise explanations from our fluent orator, four Mandarins who had arrived from the capital, invited us to enter our palanquins and resume our journey.

The bearers carried us at a run and without stopping to take breath, as far as the walls of the town. where we found the soldiers of our escort awaiting us. The precaution was by no means unnecessary, for without this help it would have been impossible for us to get through the streets, so compact and dense was the throng that impeded our passage. Our hearts beat somewhat quicker than usual, for we knew that we were about to be brought to trial by order of the Emperor.

Were we to be sent to Pekin, to Canton, or to another world? There had been nothing to alarm us hitherto; but in the absolute uncertainty of what we had to expect, it was pardonable that we should experience a little emotion.

At length we arrived in front of a great tribunal, on the massive portals of which were painted two monstrous divinities armed with great swords. The two enormous folding-doors were thrown open, and we entered, not without a thought of in what manner we were to go out again.

From Ta-tsien-lou, the frontier town, to Tching-tou-fou* the capital of Sse-tchouen, we had made twelve days' march, and had traversed nearly a thousand *li*, equivalent to about three hundred English miles.

* *Fou* signifies in China, a town of the first order; *tcheou*, of the second; *tsien*, of the third: these three orders of towns are always enclosed by ramparts.

CHAP. II.

CONVERSATION WITH THE PREFECT OF THE GARDEN OF FLOWERS. — LODGINGS IN THE COURT OF JUSTICE. — INVITATION TO DINNER WITH THE TWO PREFECTS OF THE TOWN. — CONVERSATION WITH TWO PERSONS OF DISTINCTION. — TWO MANDARINS OF HONOUR, ASSIGNED TO AMUSE US. — SOLEMN JUDGMENT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLED TRIBUNALS. — VARIOUS INCIDENTS OF THE TRIAL. — REPORT ADDRESSED TO THE EMPEROR CONCERNING US, AND THE EMPEROR'S ANSWER. — IMPERIAL EDICTS IN FAVOUR OF CHRISTIANS, OBTAINED BY THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN CHINA. — INSUFFICIENCY OF THESE EDICTS. — APPEARANCE BEFORE THE VICEROY. — PORTRAIT OF THIS PERSONAGE. — DESPATCH OF THE VICEROY TO THE EMPEROR. — CONVERSATION WITH THE VICEROY.

THE capital of the province of Sse-tchouen is divided into three prefectures, charged with the police and administrative duties for the whole town. Every prefect has a tribunal palace, where he judges the affairs of his own jurisdiction; and there he dwells with his family, his counsellors, scribes, satellites, and his numerous domestics. The prefectural tribunal unto which we were now introduced, is called *Hoa-yuen*, that is to say, the Garden of Flowers; and it was therefore with this flowery prefect that we had first to do. He was a Mandarin of about forty years of age, short, broad, and round; his face was like a great ball of fat, his nose buried and his eyes eclipsed, so that he seemed to have only two little slits to look through.

When he entered the apartment in which we were awaiting his pleasure, he found us reading some sentences in Mantchou with which the walls were decorated, and

asked us in a very affable manner whether we understood that language. We answered that we had studied it a little, and at the same time we endeavoured to translate into Chinese, the Mantchou distich that we had before us, which signified: —

"If you are in solitude, be careful to meditate on your own faults. If you are conversing with men, be careful not to speak of the faults of your neighbours."

The prefect of the Garden of Flowers, being by birth a Mantchou Tatar, was at first astonished, and then extremely flattered, to find that we understood the language of his country, that of the conquerors of China, and of the Imperial family. His funny little squeezed up eyes twinkled with pleasure, and he made us sit down on a red satin divan and talk to him. The conversation had no relation to our affairs. We spoke of literature, of geography, of the winds, of snows, of barbarous countries and civilised countries. He asked us many particulars concerning our manner of travelling from Ta-tsien-lou, whether it was true that as far as Khioung-tcheou we had been lodged in public inns, &c., and after strongly inveighing against our Mussulman Mandarin, announced to us that he was going to have us conducted to the house appointed for our residence.

At the door of the prefecture we found, not our travelling palanquins, but others, larger, more convenient and more elegant; and our attendants also had been changed.

The dwelling assigned to us was at a considerable distance, and it was necessary, in order to reach it, to traverse the principal districts of the town. At last we reached a tribunal of the second class, where resides a Mandarin,

whose office a good deal resembles that of the *Juge de Paix*, in France. We shall have occasion in the sequel to say more of this Mandarin and his family. After having exchanged a few polite phrases with the master of the house, we were installed in our apartments, which were composed of a sleeping-room, and a saloon for receiving visitors, for each of us; but besides this the whole tribunal with all its courts and gardens, and a charming *belvédere* that overlooked the town, and whence the view extended far into the country, were placed at our disposal.

The night had long closed in; and we were left to ourselves, with leisure to meditate on the singularity of our position. What a drama had our existence been for the last two years! Our peaceable departure from the Valley of Black Waters *, with Samdadchiemba, our camels, and our blue tent; our encampments and our patriarchal life in the grassy wastes of Tatary; the famous Lama monastery of Kounboom, and our long intercourse with the religious Buddhists; the great caravan of Thibet, the horrors and sufferings of that terrible journey through the deserts of High Asia; our abode at Lha-ssa; and those three frightful months, during which we had to climb mountains of snow and ice and scale precipices; all these events, all these recollections came crowding upon us at once so as almost to take away our senses. And all was not yet over: we were now, we thought, alone in the hands of the Chinese, without protection, helpless and friendless. But we were wrong; we had God for a friend and protector. There are certain situations in life when, if we lose our trust in God, we must fall into despair; but when we place our

* See Recollections of a Journey, &c.

whole reliance upon Him, we become inspired with indomitable courage. The Almighty, we said, many times has saved our lives in the most miraculous manner in Tatary and Thibet; it is not likely He would do that, to allow a Chinese afterwards to dispose of us at his pleasure; and we concluded that we might make ourselves perfectly easy, and allow our little affairs to be disposed of as best pleased his providence. The night was far advanced; we said our prayers, which, strictly speaking, might have been the morning ones, and then we lay down in peace.

On the following morning there was brought to us from the prefect a large sheet of red paper, which proved to be an invitation to dinner; and when the hour had arrived, we once more entered our palanquins and were carried to his house.

The tribunals of the Mandarins have seldom anything very remarkable about them in an architectural point of view; the edifice is always low, consisting of only one floor; and the roof, which is loaded with ornaments and little flags, alone indicates its public character. It is always surrounded by a great wall, almost as high as the building itself. Within this inclosure you see vast courts and halls, and often gardens, which are by no means unattractive; but the only thing which bears the stamp of grandeur is a series of four or five stately portals, placed in the same direction, and separating the different courts. These portals are ornamented with grand historical or mythological figures, coarsely painted, but always with very striking colours. When all these great folding-doors are opened in succession with great noise, and display, at the extremity of this grand corridor, the hall where the judge is adminstering, or rather

selling, justice, the effect on the imagination of a Chinese must be very striking.

On a raised platform in this last hall is placed a large table covered with red cloth, and on the two sides of the apartment are seen all kinds of weapons and instruments suspended to the walls. The Mandarin is seated behind the table, the scribes, counsellors, and subaltern officers standing round him. Below the platform is the place reserved for the public, as well as for the accused, and for the functionaries whose business it is to torture the unfortunate victims of Chinese justice. Behind this hall of audience are the private apartments of the Mandarin and his family.

Very often the tribunal is used also for a prison, and the condemned cells are placed in the first court. We saw here, when we entered, a crowd of unfortunate criminals, with livid faces and wasted limbs, scarcely covered by a few rags. They were crouching in the sunshine; some had on their shoulders an enormous *cangue*, a sort of moveable pillory; others were loaded with chains, and some had only fetters on their hands and feet.

The prefect of the Garden of Flowers did not make us wait long. As soon as we had entered, he presented himself, and introduced us to the dining-room, where we found a fourth guest, the prefect of the third district of the town. A single glance served to recognise in him the type of the true Chinese. He was of middling height and sufficiently plump. His features were more delicate than those of his Mantchou Tatar colleague, but inferior in penetration and intelligence; his eyes were suspicious in their expression, and not so much arch as wicked.

We were seated at a square table, missionary opposite

to missionary, and prefect to prefect; and, according to Chinese custom, the dinner began with the dessert. We amused ourselves a long while with the fruit and preserves, and our little glasses were kept continually filled with warm wine. The conversation was supposed to be quite free and easy; but we were not long in perceiving that our two magistrates were trying to subject us to an examination, without our perceiving it. This they found no very easy matter. We had been invited to dinner, and so we intended to dine in peace and as gaily as possible; and we were therefore obstinately and maliciously bent on never going the way they wanted to drive us; and when they thought they had just got us, we suddenly slipped aside, and made an innocent inquiry about the rice harvest, or the number of dynasties counted in the Chinese monarchy. What especially annoyed them was that sometimes we involuntarily fell into speaking French between ourselves, and then they glanced at us and each other with such eager anxiety, that they seemed to be trying to seize with their eyes the meaning that escaped their ears. The dinner passed, therefore, in a very amusing manner; and as it had begun with the dessert, it may be considered to have been quite in order that it ended with the soup.

We then rose from table; every one took his pipe, and tea was served. The Mantchou prefect left us for a moment, but soon returned, carrying a European book and a packet. He presented the book to us, and asked us whether we were acquainted with it. It was an old breviary.

"This is a Christian book," said we, "a prayer-book; how comes it here?" "I have lived a good deal amongst Christians," was the reply; "and one of them made me a present of it."

We looked at one another and smiled; that was rather more polite than saying, "You lie." "Here again," he went on, "this was given me too;" and he opened an old piece of silk stuff, in which the packet was wrapped, and displayed a beautiful crucifix. The two prefects must have observed the emotion we felt at the sight of what were to us such memorable relics; for on turning over the breviary we had read on the first page the name Monseigneur Dufraisse, Bishop of Tabraca and Vicar Apostolic of the province of Sse-tchouen. This holy and courageous bishop had suffered martyrdom in the year 1815, in the town of Tching-tou-fou; perhaps he had been condemned and put to the torture in the very tribunal where we were now standing.

"These articles," said we to the Mandarins, "belonged to a Frenchman who was a chief of the Christian religion, and whom you put to death in this very town, thirty years ago. This man was a saint, and you killed him like a malefactor." Our Mandarins appeared astonished and confounded at hearing us speak of an event that took place so long ago; and, after a moment's silence, one of them asked who could have deceived us by relating so extraordinary a fable. "Probably," he added, smiling, and in a careless tone, "they were only joking with you."

"No," said we, "there is not much to joke about in this business. It is known to all the nations in the West that you have tortured and strangled a great number of Christian missionaries. Only a few years ago, you put to death another Frenchman, one of our brothers, at *Ou-chang-fou*.* The two representatives of

* The venerable Perboyre, missionary of the congregation of St. Lazare; martyred in 1840, at Ou-chang-fou, the capital of the province of *Hou-pé*.

Chinese justice protested aloud, stamped with their feet, and maintained, with indescribable impudence, that our information was false. This was, of course, not the moment to insist upon its accuracy; and we, therefore, contented ourselves with begging the prefect of the Garden of Flowers to make us a present of the breviary and the crucifix. But our entreaties failed of success. This curious personage endeavoured to make us believe that he was keeping these things for a dear friend of his, who was a Christian, and that to part with them would be to violate all the *rites* of honour and friendship; and thereupon he began to speak to us of the numerous Christians existing in the province of Sse-tchouen, and to give us some interesting details concerning them.

We had been aware that the Chinese Mandarins were not ignorant of the progress of Christianity in their country; that they knew the localities in which neophytes were to be found, and that even the presence of numerous missionaries was no mystery to them; we had supposed that the Christians, cautious as they are, would scarcely have been able to elude completely the vigilance of the Chinese police, that even the times and places of their meetings were well enough known; but we did not think that the Mandarins were quite as intimately acquainted with their affairs as we discovered them to be.

At Lha-ssa the ambassador Ki-Chan had informed us, that in the province of Sse-tchouen we should find many converts, and he even indicated the places where they were to be met with in the greatest numbers. During the time when he was viceroy of that province, he had discovered that the environs of his own palace were almost entirely inhabited by Christians, and he

could even sometimes hear the sound of their hymns, when they were singing on their festival days. "I know too," he had added, "that the chief of all the Christians in the province* is named *Ma*. I know the house where he lives; every year he sends to Canton for money and various articles of merchandise; and at a certain time of the year, he goes to visit all the districts where there are Christians. I never disturbed him, because I have been assured that he is a virtuous and charitable man."

It is evident from this, that if the Chinese wished to seize on all the Christians and missionaries, it would be no difficult matter; but the Mandarins will not proceed to that extremity, for if they did they would find themselves overwhelmed with business that would bring them no kind of profit, and they might even be exposed to be degraded and sent to exile. The Emperor, and the great tribunals at Pekin, would not fail to accuse them of negligence, and call them to account for not having sooner been aware of what was passing in their Mandarinates, and causing the laws of the Empire to be put in force.

Thus the personal interest of the magistrates is often, for the Christians, the strongest guarantee of peace and tranquillity.

The hour having come in which the prefect of the Garden of Flowers had to administer justice, we took our leave. The worthy Mantchou had had the complaisance to treat us to an excellent dinner, and we were grateful to him accordingly; but we did not mean to carry our gratitude so far as to give him the infor-

* Mgr. Perocheau, Bishop of Maxula.

mation he wanted, and which he had hoped to obtain; so after having addressed each other reciprocally with all sorts of salutations, and exhausted all the formulas of Chinese politeness, we returned home.

During our absence our house had been set in order, by command of the viceroy. Two clever and well-behaved young men had been appointed to be our *valets de chambre*, and to two Mandarins of the lower class of the "Gilt Copper Ball" had been assigned the office of keeping us company, dissipating our *ennui*, and making themselves generally agreeable by the charms of their conversation. One of them, a most prodigious gabbler, was, though young, quite decrepit from the immoderate use of opium. The other was really old, and constantly coughing and uttering great sighs, probably for the vanished joys of his youth. The first occupied himself from morning till night with his pipe and his opium-lamp; the other sat crouched in a corner, picking out seeds of the water-melon with his long nails, his little withered hands looking exactly like those of an old monkey. He ate a prodigious quantity of these seeds, and moistened them with copious libations of tea, saying that only this kind of diet suited the delicacy of his temperament.

It may be supposed that the conversational talents of our two companions were not of the most brilliant order; in fact, the utmost they could do for us was to make us regret the somewhat rough and rude manners of our Tatar friends; but fortunately we had, from time to time, some visitors of distinction, whose refined and elegant deportment served to remind us that we were in the capital of the most civilised province perhaps of the Celestial Empire.

Four days after our arrival at Tching-tou-fou it was signified to us, at an early hour in the morning, that the documents relating to us having been sufficiently studied, we were to be brought to trial. This news, as may well be supposed, was to us matter of great interest.

A trial in China, and by order of the Emperor, was no trifle. Many of our now happy predecessors had only entered the tribunals to be tortured, and left them to suffer glorious martyrdom. This day, then, was to be decisive of our fate, and to put an end to all anxieties concerning the future, which for us had been so long enveloped in darkness.

Our position was not, however, the same as that of the greater part of the missionaries who had had to appear before the Mandarins. We had not been arrested in the Chinese territory, no Christian of the province had been in any relation with us, no one was at all implicated in our affairs, and we were sure that no one could be compromised on our account.

Samdadchiemba had been the only companion of our fatigues and privations, the only witness of our desire for the glory of God and the salvation of man. But our dear neophyte was now no longer with us; he was in his own country, and sheltered from all danger. We had only, therefore, to think of ourselves; the Chinese government had only our two heads to strike at, and the question was much simplified. In this quite exceptional situation, we could, with God's help, present ourselves before the court in a serene and equable state of mind.

The general administration of each province is entrusted to two *sse* or commissioners, who have their tribunals in the capital. These are the most important

after those of the viceroy. We were conducted to the judgment hall of the first provincial commissioner, who bears the title of *Pou-tching-sse*. His colleague, the *Ngan-tsha-sse*, or Inspector of Crimes, a kind of attorney-general, was associated with the principal Mandarins of the town; for, as we were told, the trial was to be a solemn and extraordinary one.

An immense crowd surrounded the tribunal; amongst this assemblage of the populace, eager to see the faces of the "devils of the Western Sea," were a few sympathetic-looking countenances, which seemed to say, "You are in a very unfortunate position, and we can do nothing for you." The dejection of these poor Christians pained us, and gladly would we have infused into their souls a little of the calmness and peace with which our own were filled. The way was cleared by soldiers armed with bamboos and rattans, the great doors were opened, and we entered. We were placed in a small waiting-room, with the two amiable companions that had been assigned to us, and thence we could amuse ourselves by contemplating the movement and the sensation that reigned in the tribunal. The Mandarins who were to take part in the ceremonial arrived in succession, followed by suites of attendants, who had uncommonly the appearance of gangs of thieves. The satellites ran backwards and forwards, in their long red robes, and hideous peaked hats of black felt or iron wire, surmounted by long pheasant's feathers. They were armed with long rusty swords, and carried chains, pincers, and various instruments of torture, of strong and terrible forms. The Mandarins were collected in groups, talking with one another, and interrupting themselves frequently by bursts of laughter; the sub-

altern officers, scribes, and executioners, went and came, as if to give themselves airs of importance; and every one seemed to anticipate a scene that would be curious and seasoned by unaccustomed emotions.

All this agitation, and these interminable preparations, had in them something of extravagance and exaggeration; they were evidently intended to frighten us. At length every one had found his place, and the tumult was succeeded by a profound silence. A moment afterwards a terrible cry, uttered by a great number of voices, was heard in the hall of audience; it was repeated three times, and our companions told us that it was on the judges making their solemn entry and installing themselves in their seats. Two officers, decorated with the Crystal Ball, then appeared, and made us a sign to follow them. They came between us, our companions placed themselves behind, and the two accused persons walked thus to judgment.

A great door was then suddenly opened, and we beheld, at a glance, the numerous personages of this Chinese *performance*. Twelve stone steps led up to the vast inclosure where the judges were placed; on each side of this staircase was a line of executioners in red dresses; and when the accused passed tranquilly through their ranks, they all cried out with a loud voice, "Tremble! Tremble!" and rattled their instruments of torture. We were stopped at about the middle of the hall, and then eight officers of the court proclaimed in a chanting voice the customary formula:—"Accused! on your knees! on your knees!" The accused remained silent and motionless. The summons was repeated, but there was still no alteration in their attitude. The two officers with the Crystal Ball, now thought themselves

called on to come to our assistance, and pulled our arms to help us to kneel down. But a solemn look and some few emphatic words sufficed to make them let go their hold. They even judged it expedient to retire a little, and keep a respectful distance.

"Every empire," said we, addressing our judges, "has its own customs and manners. When we appeared before the ambassador Ki-Chan at Lha-ssa, we remained standing; and Ki-Chan considered that in doing so we were only acting with reasonable conformity to the customs of our country."

We waited for an answer from the president, but he remained dumb. The other judges contented themselves with looking at us, and communicating among themselves by grimaces. The tribunal had apparently been arranged and decorated expressly for the purpose of giving us a high idea of the majesty of the Empire. The walls were hung with red draperies, on which certain sentences were written in large black characters; gigantic lanterns of the brightest colours were suspended from the ceiling; and behind the seats of the judges were seen the insignia of their dignity, borne by officers in rich silk robes. The hall was surrounded by a great number of soldiers in uniform and under arms, and along the sides were seated a select number of spectators, who had probably obtained their places through favour and patronage.

The *Pou-tching-sse*, or first provincial commissioner, filled the office of president. He was a man of about fifty years of age, with thick lips of a violet colour, flabby cheeks, a dirty white complexion, a square nose, long flat shining ears, and a forehead deeply wrinkled. His eyes were probably small and red; but they were so hidden behind large spectacles, which were tied in

their place with a black string, that this could not positively be ascertained. His costume was superb; on his breast glittered the large Imperial dragon, embroidered in gold and silver; a globe of red coral, the decoration of Mandarins of the first class, surmounted his official cap; and a long perfumed chaplet hung to his neck. The other judges were attired in pretty nearly the same fashion, and they had all more or less genuine Chinese faces, but none of them was comparable to the president. His grand spectacles especially, produced on us an astounding effect, but perhaps not exactly the kind of one he had calculated on. We saw that this man was seeking to impose on us by a display of his dignity. He had made no reply to the observation we had made when we refused to kneel down; he had not even made the slightest gesture, but had remained, ever since we had entered, as motionless as a statue. This somewhat burlesque behaviour lasted long enough to enable us to study quite at our ease the curious society in which we found ourselves, and it was so amusing that we began to gossip together in French, though in a low voice, communicating to each other our little momentary impressions. Had this lasted much longer, it might have ended in upsetting our gravity; but luckily the president made up his mind to break his majestic silence.

In a nasal, squeaking voice he began to speak, asking us of what country we were.

"We are men of the French Empire."

"Why did you quit your noble country to come into the Central Kingdom?"

"To preach to the men of your illustrious Empire the doctrine of the Lord of heaven."

"I have heard say that this doctrine is very sublime."

"That is true; but the men of your nation are endowed with intelligence, and with continued application they may attain to the acquisition of this doctrine."

"You speak the language of Pekin; where have you learnt it?"

"In the north of the Empire; the pronunciation is best there."

"That is true, but where in the north? Who was your master?"

"Every one; we learned a little here, and a little there, by speaking and hearing it spoken."

After these few questions the president called an attendant, and ordered him to bring a little casket, carefully enveloped in skins and sealed in several places with large red seals. He then opened it before us with much solemnity, and showed us what it contained. We recollected then that, when we were at Lha-ssa, and the ambassador Ki-Chan had examined our trunks, he had expressed a wish to keep some articles by way of vouchers, and we had given him some letters, and a few little translations from Tatar and Chinese books. The president now displayed these papers before us, inquiring at the same time whether anything was wanting; and in order to assist us in giving an accurate reply, he furnished us with an exact list, made at Lha-ssa, and signed by Ki-Chan and ourselves. Nothing was missing; and they made us sign a declaration to that effect, drawn up in French and Chinese. We could not but admire the exactness and regularity with which all this was done.

Whilst the president was interrogating us, which he did with apparent good nature and affability, we remarked that the person seated on his right hand, his

Ngan-tcha-sse, or Inspector of Crimes, a kind of attorney-general, a wrinkled old man with a face like a polecat, who rocked himself about, muttered continually between his teeth, and seemed vexed at the turn the discussion was taking. After finishing the examination of the little casket, the president became again silent and motionless as before, and the malicious public accuser began to speak. He made great use of his opportunity; discoursed with great volubility concerning the majesty of the Celestial Empire, and the inviolability of its territory; reproached us with our audacity, with our vagabondising life about the provinces and among the tributary nations; and then fired off at us a volley of questions, which certainly proved his eager desire to become acquainted with every particular concerning us. He asked who had introduced us to the Empire; with whom we had entered into any relation; whether there were many European missionaries in China, where they lived, what resources they could command for their subsistence; and finally, a crowd of questions that appeared to us exceedingly impertinent. His tone and manner, too, were by no means in accordance with politeness and "the rites;" and it became necessary to give this man a lesson, and moderate his impetuosity. Whilst he was perorating at a great rate, and allowing his eloquence to overflow into all sorts of subjects, we listened to him with great calmness and patience. When he had finished, we said to him:—"We men of the West, you see, like to discuss matters of business with coolness and method; but your language has been so diffuse and violent, that we have scarcely been able to make out your meaning. Be so good as to begin again, and express your thoughts more clearly and more peaceably."

These words, pronounced with great slowness and gravity, had all the effect we could have desired; whispers and significant smiles began to circulate through the assembly, and the judges cast jocose glances at the "Inspector of Crimes," who was evidently quite disconcerted. He wished to resume his speech; but his ideas had become so confused, that he did not seem to know what he had been saying.

We then addressed the president, saying that, as we found nothing but disorder and confusion in the speech of the Inspector of Crimes, we could not possibly reply to it; and begging that he would himself continue the examination, as "We men of the West admired dignity and precision of language."

These words tickled the vanity of the president; he returned to us our cajolery with interest; and at last inquired who had brought us to China, and with whom we had lodged.

"Our hearts are saddened," we replied, "that we are not able to satisfy you on this point. We will speak to you of ourselves as much as you please; but of those who have been in relation with us, never a word. Our resolution on that point has been long since taken, and there is no human power capable of inducing us to alter it."

"But you must answer!" cried the Inspector of Crimes, gesticulating violently; "you must answer! How else would truth be found in this investigation?"

"The president has questioned us in a noble and authoritative manner, and we have replied to him with simplicity and frankness. As for you, Inspector of Crimes, we have already said that we do not understand you."

The Assessor of the Left here cut short the dispute by giving us a large sheet of paper to examine. It con-

tained nothing but an alphabet of European letters coarsely drawn. Probably it had been obtained in the pillage of some Christian establishment, where young Chinese were being brought up to the ecclesiastical profession.

"Do you know that paper?" asked the Assessor.

"Yes! They are the twenty-four radical signs, with which all the words of our language are constructed."

"Can you read them, and let us hear the sound of them?"

One of us had then the complaisance to repeat solemnly his A B C; and during the time, each of the judges drew from his boot, which in China often serves for a pocket, a copy of the alphabet, in which the pronunciation of every European letter had been given, better or worse, in Chinese characters. It seems that this incident had been concerted and prepared beforehand.

Every judge had his eyes intently fixed upon the paper, and doubtless promised himself to make in this one lesson great progress in a European language. The Assessor of the Left, keeping his eyes and the fore-finger of his right hand fixed on the first letter, and addressing himself to the one of the prisoners who had just said A B C, begged him to repeat the letters slowly, and pause a little on each.

The prisoner, however, making four steps forward, and politely extending his alphabet towards the philological judge, observed:—

"I had thought we came here to submit to trial; but it seems we came to be schoolmasters, and you to be our scholars."

A peal of laughter shook the assembly, in which the

solemn president, and even the Inspector of Crimes, took part; and thus terminated their lesson in our language.

It will be observed that this terrible trial had been gradually assuming a less formidable and more amusing aspect. The poor accused persons might at least hope there was now no intention of tearing their flesh with red hot pincers, or sticking sharp reeds under their nails. The faces of the executioners assumed a less ferocious expression, and the instruments of torture began to look very much like an idle parade.

The president then asked us, what good it was to the French to come and make Christians in China? what advantage they could hope for from it? "Material advantage? None! France has no need of gold or silver, or of the productions of foreign countries; she makes, on the contrary, enormous sacrifices to them out of pure generosity. She sends you the means of founding schools, she collects your forsaken children, and often feeds your poor in times of famine. But, over and above all this, she sends you the truth. You say that all men are brothers, and this is true; this is why they all ought to worship the same God, He who is the Father of us all. The nations of Europe know the true God, and they come to make Him known to you. The happiness which consists in making the truth known and loved, this is the profit sought for by the missionaries who come to you."

The president and the other judges, with the exception always of the Inspector of Crimes, then asked for some information concerning the Christian religion; and this we gave them with the greatest eagerness. At length the president said to us, in a very affable manner,

that doubtless we had by this time some need of rest, and that this was enough for to-day. Thereupon the Court rose, we made a profound bow, and the judges departed on their side and we on ours, whilst the soldiers and satellites uttered yells that shook the foundation of the building, this being, it appears, the customary ceremonial on the entrance and departure of the official persons.

This first inquiry had then terminated in a favourable manner; at least, we concluded as much from the congratulations we received, in traversing the halls and courts on our return. The Mandarins of the town, who had attended the trial in order to increase the dignity and splendour of the Court, saluted us in an affected manner, saying that all was well, and that our affairs were going on very prosperously. In the different quarters of the town that we passed through, we met numbers of Christians, whose faces were expanded and beaming with joy, and whom we recognised by their making the sign of the cross as we went by; and glad were we to see confidence and courage reviving in the hearts of these poor people, who had doubtless suffered much from learning that we were in the hands of the deplorable mockery of justice that exists in their country.

Our two Mandarins of honour, who during the long sitting of the Court had had to remain standing behind us, no doubt also shared in the emotions of the day and the general joy; but they were overcome by fatigue, and as soon as we had reached our abode, they flung themselves with impassioned eagerness, the one on his pipe, the other on his melon seeds. In the evening we received a great number of visitors of distinction, and we endeavoured to find out what there might still

be for us to fear or to hope. It was generally agreed that we should be well treated; but that our trial would be greatly protracted, and that in all probability we should have to go to Pekin. Some said that the Emperor himself wished to question us, others thought that the *King-pou*, or grand tribunal of crimes, now sitting at Pekin, would ultimately decide our fate. One thing was certain, namely, that the Emperor had sent a despatch to the viceroy on the subject of our affairs. We asked to see it; but our request was refused, and the Chinese were even scandalised at our audacity in wishing to cast our eyes on what had been written by the "Son of Heaven." The viceroy alone had read it, and had mentioned something of its contents to his courtiers. A year afterwards, when we were at Macao, we found means to procure the Report that the viceroy had sent to court concerning us, and we found in that a portion of this famous Imperial despatch. The Report begins thus:—

"Report addressed to the Emperor, on the fourth day of the fourth moon of the twenty-sixth year of *Tao-kouang* (1846).

"In virtue of the powers conferred by a supreme decree, Ki-Chan has announced to your Majesty that he has arrested certain strangers from *Fou-lansi* (France); and that he has seized certain foreign books and writings in strange characters. He has added, 'It appears from the declaration of these strangers, that, by way of Canton and other places, they have arrived at the capital (Pekin); that returning thence by *Ching-king* (Moukden, the capital of Mantchuria), they have traversed Mongolia and visited *Si-tsang* (Thibet) with the purpose of

preaching their religion.' That after having interrogated these strangers, he has charged a magistrate to conduct them into the province Sse-tchouen, &c. As the aforesaid strangers understand the Chinese language, and can read and write both Mantchou, and Mongol, it has not appeared very certain to your Majesty that they really were from France, and your Majesty has forwarded to me a despatch, sealed with the Imperial seal, and enclosing the following orders: — 'When they shall have arrived at Sse-tchouen, inquire with care into all the circumstances of their journey, as well as the names of the places through which they have passed, and endeavour to discover the truth. The moment of their arrival, send to me a copy of the first report, and of their declaration. Have their letters and their books in foreign languages examined, as well as the articles enclosed in the wooden case, and transmit to me, at the same time, all necessary information. I address to you this Imperial order that you may make yourself acquainted with it. Respect this! Respect this!'"

According to this Imperial document, therefore, it appeared that at the court of Pekin they had not quite made up their minds on the subject of our nationality. Since we knew how to read and speak Chinese, Mantchou, and Mongol, the "Son of Heaven" was inclined to think that we were not really Frenchmen, and had charged the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen to clear up this difficulty. Our fate depended on the new information that was to be given to the Emperor, and the opinion of those who supposed we should have to go to Pekin did not seem without foundation. For ourselves, the idea of travelling to Pekin appeared by no means disagreeable; we had been so tossed about for the last two years, that

no change in our itinerary could well put us out of our way. A particular circumstance, too, that had just come to our knowledge, made us think with much pleasure of the chance of seeing the court of Pekin, and finding ourselves face to face with that astonishing monarch who governs "the ten thousand kingdoms, and the four seas which are under heaven."

In returning from the palace of the provincial commissioner, whilst we were crossing a kind of square thronged with curious people, a little packet had been with great adroitness flung into our palanquin, and of course we made haste to conceal it.

In the evening, when we at length found ourselves alone in our chamber, and had not to dread the indiscretion of visitors, we eagerly opened and examined the mysterious missive. It proved to be a long letter from the Chinese priest, charged with the care of the Christians of Tching-tou-fou. It gave us clear and precise information concerning the embassy of M. Lagrenée, and we immediately recognised in him the *La-ko-nie* who had been mentioned to us in so vague a manner by the young Christian we had met in the Bonze convent before entering the town. In communicating to us the memorial and the edicts in favour of the Christians obtained by M. Lagrenée, this missionary warned us that, notwithstanding all these important concessions, the position of the Christians was in reality very little improved; and that in many localities the persecution was still going on with unabated severity. As very false impressions have been created in France, on the subject of the religious liberty obtained by the embassy sent by M. Guizot to China, we will now enter into a few details with respect to it.

After having concluded a treaty of commerce between France and China, a treaty which was the principal object of the embassy, M. Lagrenée wished before his return to make some attempt to ameliorate the fate of the Chinese Christians and missionaries in these unfortunate countries. He had not, indeed, received from his government any official commission to that effect; and it must be acknowledged it was a very delicate and difficult business to undertake. The representative of the French government might, certainly, protest against the atrocious executions of many of the missionaries; he might require that in future Europeans arrested in the interior should be sent back to one of the free ports, without being subjected to ill treatment; the English, in their treaty of Nankin, had already carried this equitable measure. But to demand from the Emperor of China the religious liberty of his own subjects, was rather a more awkward thing; for, in fact, what claim had the nations of Europe to interfere in the government of the Celestial Empire, and dictate to the Emperor the measures he should adopt for the government of his own people? It is evident that the French ambassador who should attempt to negotiate with the Imperial commissioner with this view, would be considered very officious, but not at all official, in his conduct. M. Lagrenée could not possibly demand, in the name of King Louis Philippe, that the Emperor *Tao-kouang* should leave his subjects free to profess the Christian religion.

The opportunity, nevertheless, was a very favourable one. The Chinese were still smarting under the attack of the English, and were perfectly well disposed to promise anything to Europeans, —of course with the

mental reservation of breaking their promises whenever it should be found convenient. And that was in fact precisely what took place. After long and earnest entreaties on the part of M. Lagrenée, which are a proof of the interest he took in the cause of the Chinese missions, the Imperial commissioner *Ky-yn* addressed to his Emperor the following memorial.

"Ky-yn, Grand Imperial Commissioner and Viceroy of the two provinces of Kouang-tong and Kouang-si, presents respectfully this memorial.

"After a profound investigation, I have come to the conclusion that the religion of the Lord of heaven*, is that which is venerated and professed by all the nations of the West. Its principal aim is to exhort to good and to repress evil. Formerly, under the dynasty of *Ming*, it penetrated into the Central Kingdom†, and at that epoch it was not prohibited. Subsequently, as it often happens, there were found among the Chinese who followed the religion, men who abused it to do wrong, and the magistrates sought out and punished the guilty. Their judgments are recorded in the judicial Acts.

"Under the reign of *Kea-king*, a special article of the penal code was promulgated for the punishment of

* The Chinese designate thus the Christian Religion.

† Towards the end of the 16th century. Christianity did, in fact, penetrate into China as early as the 5th and 6th century; and especially in the 13th, it was very flourishing; at this epoch there existed at Pekin an archbishop with four suffragans. The Imperial commissioner Ky-yn might be ignorant of this fact, but it is vexatious that no one should be found to inform him of it.

these crimes. It was intended to prevent Chinese Christians from doing wrong, and by no means to prohibit the religion venerated and professed by the nations of the West. I dare, therefore, to supplicate your Majesty for the future to exempt from chastisement those Chinese who profess the Christian religion, and who have not been found guilty of any crime or disorder.

"As for the French and the other foreigners who profess the Christian religion, they have been permitted to build churches and chapels in the territory of the five ports which are open to commerce; but they must not take the liberty of entering into the interior of the Empire to preach their religion. If any one in defiance of this prohibition should go beyond the assigned limits, and make rash excursions into other districts, the local authorities are to seize him and deliver him to the consul of his nation, in order that he may be kept within the bounds of his duty and punished. But he is not to be chastised summarily, or put to death.

"By that means your Majesty will show your benevolence and your affection for virtuous men; the tares will not be confounded with the good grain, and your sentiments and the justice of the laws will be made manifest.

"Supplicating your Majesty to exempt from all chastisement the Christians who remain honest and virtuous in their conduct, I venture humbly to present this petition, in order that your August Goodness may deign to approve my plan, and command it to be executed.

"(Respectful Petition.)"

THE APPROVAL OF THE EMPEROR.

"On the nineteenth day of the eleventh moon of the twenty-fourth year of *Tao-houang* (1844), I received words written in vermilion: —

"I ACQUIESCE IN THIS PETITION. RESPECT THIS!"

In conformity with this approval, an Imperial edict was issued, addressed to the viceroys and governors of provinces, eulogizing the Christian religion, and forbidding for the future all pursuit of Chinese Christians on account of it by any of the courts great or small.

The missionaries and Christians were transported with joy when these edicts were made known; they thought they saw in them the dawn of the long-desired era of religious liberty for the missions of China, and the consequent rapid progress of Christianity; and the blessings and thanks of Europe and Asia were poured out on the French embassy.

Those, however, who had a practical knowledge of the Chinese and the Mandarins, could foresee that in reality the results of these edicts would be far from corresponding to these magnificent hopes. The Imperial command was promulgated and made known to the five free ports open to European commerce; and M. Lagrenée desired that it should be published also in the interior of the Empire; which was promised, but of course not done.

Copies of the petition of the commissioner Ky-yn and of the Emperor's edict, were however distributed in great numbers among the Christian communities of the interior, and the neophytes were all able to read the eulogium that the Emperor had pronounced on their religion, and the prohibition of any future persecutions that he had addressed to the Mandarins, and they took

it all for earnest. The Christians believed themselves perfectly free; and were for a brief interval convinced that, if the government of Pekin did not yet favour completely their mode of belief, it at least granted it perfect toleration.

But the local persecutions went on, nevertheless, as if neither ambassador, nor petition, nor edict had ever existed; and the Christians soon discovered that they were building on shifting sands, and that the paper liberty that had found its way to them, like a contraband article, was a mere chimera.

Those who were dragged before the tribunals, and who were so simple as to claim the protection of the Imperial edict and of the French embassy, were silenced in the most imperious manner. "What!" said the Mandarins, "has a low fellow like you the impudence to pretend to interfere in the transactions of the Emperor with foreign nations!"

The negotiations in favour of religious liberty, that took place between the French ambassador and the cunning Chinese diplomatists, were in fact of little value. They had no official character. The French government had made no demand of the Emperor of China, and he had made no promise to France. All that had passed was merely a personal communication between M. Lagrenée and Ky-yn. The one had expressed strongly his sympathy for the Chinese Christians, and the other had courteously recommended them to the protection of his Emperor.

The French ambassador once gone, and Ky-yn recalled, all these fine promises were scattered to the winds.

This is, in short, all that was obtained. In the petition

of the Imperial commissioner he supplicates the Emperor "to deign for the future to exempt from chastisement, Chinese as well as foreigners who shall be found professing the Christian religion, but who have not been guilty of any crime or disorder." But who was to watch the Mandarins, and find out whether they persecuted the Christians or not? Could the Chinese government permit foreigners to overlook the conduct of its own officers? If complaints were made, could not the Chinese always reply to them by falsehood? Could they not always say that the Christians detained in prison, or sent into exile, were punished for other crimes than that of their religious faith? And in fact this is precisely what has been done, and what it was very easy to foresee.

On the subject of the missionaries it is said in the petition, "neither the French nor other foreigners are to preach their religion in the interior of the Empire; and if any one, in defiance of this prohibition, should venture to pass beyond the assigned limits, he shall be delivered to the consul of his nation, in order that he may be restrained within his duty and punished."

Now, it is well known that our consuls would not exactly punish a missionary for preaching the Gospel; but these expressions would lead the Chinese to believe that we are disorderly men, stepping beyond the line of our duty, and punishable by the Mandarins of our own country; and it is evident such an impression is not likely to increase the influence of the missionaries. They may, perhaps, no longer be lawfully put to death when they are arrested; but can one be surprised that, on their painful journeys back to their consuls, they are subjected to the contempt, the sarcasms, and the ill-treatment of the Mandarins and their satellites?

If we should put it to the missionaries themselves who are preaching the Gospel in China in the midst of great sufferings and privations, whether they prefer the risk of death that they were liable to in former days, or the melancholy position in which they now find themselves, we know them sufficiently to be sure of their answer. We have never studied diplomacy; but it certainly seems that the excellent intentions of the French ambassador might have lent a more effectual support to the propagation of the faith. At various epochs French missionaries have suffered a martyr's death in various parts of China. In 1840, M. Perboyre, an apostle and a saint, was put to death by order of the Emperor, in a grand ceremonial on the public square of the capital of *Hou-pé;* not a word was said of this atrocious and iniquitous execution, or of any other. When France entered into diplomatic relation with China, the Imperial commissioner must have expected to be questioned concerning these judicial assassinations, and the silence of our ambassador must have greatly surprised him. France certainly had a right to ask of the Chinese government, some account of so many Frenchmen unjustly tortured and put to death. She might have ventured at least to ask the question, for what crime the Emperor had strangled them? A few inquires on the subject of the venerable martyr of 1840, might have helped the Chinese to believe that France does take some interest in the lives of her children. The Chinese government ought, in our opinion, to have been strongly urged on this point; the moment was favourable, and it ought to have been caught in the fact of its savage barbarism, and public and honourable amends to the memory of our martyrs inexorably demanded from it,

in the face of the whole Empire; an apology ought to have appeared in the Pekin gazette, and an expiatory monument have been erected on the public square of *Ou-tchang-fou*, where M. Perboyre was strangled. In this manner the Christian religion would have been for ever glorified in the Empire, the Christians raised in public opinion, and the life of a missionary rendered inviolable. It would then have been needless to stipulate that, for the future, the Chinese should not chastise them in a summary manner, or put them to death. They would themselves have taken very good care to do nothing of the kind. This ought to have been the first business of the embassy, on its arrival at Canton; assuredly, in so doing it would have had justice on its side; and the parade, the festivals, and the shakings of hands might have come afterwards.

Do not let it be thought, however, that we have the slightest intention of throwing any blame on the ambassador. Since we have undertaken to speak of China, we must do so truly and frankly, to the best of our knowledge and belief; but we are fully persuaded that M. Lagrenée has himself the interest of the missions much at heart, and that, if it only depended on him, all the Chinese would be Christians, and would profess their religion in perfect liberty. We know how difficult and delicate was his task; that he had to act on his own responsibility, and without any official instruction from his government; but we cannot avoid speaking of things as they are. In 1844, people in Europe were generally convinced, and many are so still, that China was at length open, and the Christian religion entirely free.

But the truth is, unfortunately, that the English

have no more opened China, commercially speaking, than the French ambassador has obtained for the Chinese religious liberty. The subjects of her Britannic Majesty would not venture to set foot in the interior of the city of Canton, although by treaty they are in possession of this privilege; they cannot go beyond its environs, for the intolerance and hatred of the native population keeps them in some measure blockaded in their factories. As for the Christians their situation is not in the least ameliorated; they are, as they were before, at the mercy of the Mandarins, who persecute them, pillage them, throw them into prison, torture them, and send them to die in exile, just as easily as if there were no representative of France in the Empire, and no French ships of war on her coasts. It is only in the five free ports that they do not dare to torment the neophytes, thanks to the energetic and constant protection of our legation at Macao and our consul at *Chang-hai*.

Although the Imperial edict in favour of the Christians appeared to us insufficient, and almost delusive, on account of its non-promulgation in the interior of the Empire, we resolved to take what little advantage we could of it, whether for ourselves or the Christians, should any good opportunity present itself.

Two days after our appearance before the tribunal of the first commissioner, the Mantchou prefect of the Garden of Flowers, who had become rather friendly, announced to us that our affair being sufficiently known, we should not have to undergo another judicial examination; and that in the course of the day the viceroy would have us summoned, in order to signify what had been determined with respect to us. We had a long and lively

discussion, on the question of the ceremonies that we should have to observe before the chief of the province and the representative of the Emperor. They brought a crowd of arguments to convince us that we ought to go down on our knees before him. In the first place, it was a prodigious honour for us to be admitted to his presence at all, since he might be considered as a sort of diminutive of the Son of Heaven. Then, to remain standing straight upright before him would be to offer him an insult; besides giving him a very bad idea of our education, it would irritate him, would alter the good disposition he had towards us, would draw down his anger upon us; and moreover, they added, whether we liked it or not we should find ourselves compelled to kneel. It would be impossible for us to resist the influence of his majestic presence.

We ourselves felt pretty sure of the contrary, and we declared to the prefect, that he might depend upon it that would not happen. Nevertheless, we would cause no scandal, nor give the viceroy any reason to think us wanting in sentiments of respect and veneration towards his person and his high dignity. We begged the prefect of the Garden of Flowers, therefore, to inform the viceroy that we positively could not appear before him in an attitude that our manners did not require even in presence of our own sovereign, but that we had no intention of failing in respect towards him, and that we would pay him every honour conformably to the rites of the West; but that we would rather submit to the irremediable misfortune of being deprived of his presence than yield this point. It may readily be supposed that in fact we cared little enough about this matter of going down on our knees, since in China it is

really nothing more than a mark of respect and civility; but we determined to keep an upright position, because, if we had once consented to bend the knee, we should have been obliged ever after to prostrate ourselves before every trumpery little official that we happened to meet, and that would have been a source of exceeding annoyance; while we thought with reason that every one would consider himself obliged to treat with politeness and consideration, the men who had not been obliged to kneel, even in the first tribunal of the province. Our obstinacy was completely successful, and it was agreed that we should be presented in the European fashion.

Towards noon two handsome state palanquins were sent to fetch us, and we betook ourselves, attended by a brilliant escort, to the palace of the most illustrious *Pao-hing*, viceroy of the province of Sse-tchouen. The tribunal of this high dignitary of the Chinese Empire had nothing to distinguish it from those that we had seen before, except its superior size and somewhat better preservation. It was in the same style of architecture, and had precisely the same combination of courts and gardens. All the Mandarins, civil and military, without exception had been convoked; and by degrees as they arrived they took their places according to their respective ranks and dignities, in a vast hall on long divans, where we were already placed, in company with the two prefects of the town, who were to present us. In a neighbouring apartment an orchestra of Chinese musicians was executing some soft but very whimsical symphonies, that were by no means unpleasing. Very soon it was announced that the viceroy was in his cabinet. A great door opened,

all the Mandarins rose, fell into order, and defiled in the most profound silence as far as an antechamber, where they ranged themselves according to rank.

Our two introducers now desired us to pass through the files of Mandarins, and conducted us to the door of a cabinet, which was open, but they stopped on the threshold and made a sign for us to enter. At the same time the viceroy, who was seated cross-legged on a divan, beckoned us towards him in a very gracious manner. We bowed low and advanced some steps. We were alone in the apartment with him; for all the Mandarins, civil and military, were mounting guard in the antechamber; but they were near enough to hear what was spoken.

We were at first greatly struck by the simplicity of the apartment, and of the high personage who inhabited it. It was a narrow room papered with blue, and its only furniture consisted of a small divan with red cushions, a flower-stand, and some vases of flowers. The illustrious Pao-hing was an old man of seventy or thereabouts, tall and thin, but with a countenance full of sweetness and benevolence. His small, but still brilliant, eyes were keen and penetrating; his beard long and somewhat scanty, and his complexion very fair, with a slight yellow tinge. Altogether his appearance was not wanting in majesty, and the simple blue silk robe he wore, contrasted favourably with the richly embroidered habits of the Mandarins in attendance upon him. Pao-hing was a Mantchou Tatar, and a cousin and intimate friend of the Emperor. In their infancy they had lived together, and had never ceased to feel towards each other a lively and cordial affection. The viceroy asked us, at first, whether we were suitably

lodged in the mansion he had assigned to us. "We have been making inquiries," he added, "of the soldiers of your escort; and it appears that the military officer who accompanied you from Ta-tsien-lou, did not lodge you in the communal palaces. I have dismissed that vile man, who had no regard for the dignity of the Empire." It was in vain that we endeavoured to plead for him.

"And why in fact," said the viceroy crossing his arms, "did they prevent you from residing in Thibet? Why did they compel you to return?"

"Illustrious personage," said we, "we understand nothing of the matter, and should be very glad to know. When we return to France, and our sovereign asks us why we were expelled from Thibet, what must we answer him?"

Here Pao-hing burst out into a vehement attack upon Ki-Chan; he spoke of the difficulties that he was always throwing in the path of the government, and ended by calling him *to-ché;* an expression that can only be translated by "creator of embarrassments."

Pao-hing afterward requested us to come quite close to him; and then he set himself to take a deliberate survey of our personal appearance, first of one and then of the other, while he at the same time amused himself by turning in his mouth fragments of the Areca nut, which the Mantchous like so much to chew. He took several pinches of snuff also, out of a little phial, and had the courtsey to offer it to us, though without speaking, and still seeming as profoundly occupied with observing our features as if he were about to take our portraits. We considered that he admired our beauty, for he asked whether we had any medicine or recipe for pre-

serving that fresh and florid complexion. We replied that the temperament of Europeans differed much from that of the Chinese; but that in all countries a sober and well regulated course of life was the best means of preserving health.

"Do you hear," he added, "turning to the numerous Mandarins in waiting, and repeating emphatically, "in all countries a sober and well regulated life is the best means of preserving health." All the balls, red, blue, white, and yellow, bowed profoundly in token of assent.

After having taken another long pinch, Pao-hing asked us what our plans were, and where we wished to go to. This seemed rather a curious question, and we answered, "Where we wish to go to is to Thibet and Lha-ssa.

"Thibet and Lha-ssa! Why you have just come from there."

"No matter! We wish to go back to them."

"What do you want to do at Thibet and Lha-ssa?"

"You know that our only business anywhere is to preach our religion."

"Yes, I know; but you must not think of Lha-ssa, you would do much better to preach your religion in your own country. Thibet is a good for nothing place. I would not have sent you away from it, since you wished to stay; but now that you are here, I must send you to Canton."

"Since we are not free, send us where you please."

The viceroy then said, that since we were now in his province, he would be answerable for our safety; but that it was his duty to forward us to the representative of our nation. "You may," he added, "remain for a time at Tching-tou-fou, to rest yourselves and make the necessary

preparations for your journey; and I shall see you again before your departure. In the mean time I will give such orders as will enable you to travel as conveniently as possible." We bowed respectfully and thanked him for his kind intentions with respect to our accommodation. Just as we were taking our leave, he called us back to ask about our yellow caps and red girdles. "Your costume," said he; "is not that of the Central Nation, and you must not travel in that fashion."

"Behold!" said we, "you have the right not only to hinder us from going where we will, but even to prevent our dressing ourselves according to our own fancy!"

Pao-hing began to laugh at this, and said as he waved his hand in farewell, that since we were so fond of that costume, we might keep it. The viceroy then returned to his private apartments to the sound of music; and the Mandarins accompanied us to the gate of the palace, congratulating us on the benevolent and cordial reception we had met with from the most illustrious representative of the Son of Heaven, in the province of Sse-tchouen.

We have already mentioned the report that Pao-hing addressed to the Emperor concerning us, and we will give here the sequel of it, which is a reply to the Imperial despatch already cited: —

"I, your subject," says the viceroy of Sse-tchouen, "have carefully inquired into the purpose which the said foreigners have in undertaking such long journeys to preach their religion, and whence they derive the resources necessary for their daily maintenance, why they remain so long without returning to their country, whether any definite period is assigned to their stay, what number of proselytes they have made, what special

object they had in wishing to go to Si-tsang (Thibet) which is the residence of the Lamas.

"The result of these inquiries is, that they are travelling about only to preach their religion, and that their mission is to be of uncertain duration. When, whilst on a journey, they think they shall want the means of supplying their necessary expenses, they write to the agent of their nation, who is at Macao, and he immediately sends them money. In all the provinces of China there are men of the same country, who have expatriated themselves to preach their religion, and there is not one of them who does not exhort men to do good. They do not propose to themselves any other object. They neither recollect the numbers nor the names of the persons to whom they have taught their doctrine.

"As to their journey to Thibet, they wished, after having preached their religion there, to return from it to their own country by the way of Nepaul; but as they were not sufficiently versed in the language of Thibet, they were not able during their stay there to make any converts. At this epoch the high functionary Ki-Chan who resides in the capital of Thibet, ordered an inquiry, in consequence of which they were arrested and sent under escort to Sse-tchouen.

"I have opened their wooden chest, and examined the letters and papers it contained; but I have not been able to find any one who could read those characters and understand them.

"The strangers when interrogated, on the subject, replied that they were family letters, and authentic certificates of their religious mission.

"I wished to inquire carefully whether the declaration

they made before Ki-Chan, was, or was not, the expression of the truth; but I have not been able to find any irrefragable proof.

"I then examined their beards and their eyebrows, their eyes and their complexions; and I found them all different from those of the men of the Central Kingdom; so that it seemed to me demonstrated that they were really strangers, coming from a distant country, and that they are not to be mistaken for worthless persons from the Interior Territory (China). Thereupon there does not remain in my mind the slightest doubt.

"If it should be considered desirable to know the contents of their letters and foreign books, they must, I think, be sent to Canton, in order that a man versed in those foreign languages may be found, who shall read them and make known their contents.

"Should no further discovery be made concerning them, these strangers may then be placed in the hands of the consul of France, in order that he may recognise them, and send them back to their own country. By that means the truth will be brought to light.

"As for Samdadchiemba, as it appears from his examination that he was only attached to these strangers in the quality of a servant receiving wages, it seems proper to send him back to his native country; namely, the district of *Nien-pé* in the province of *Kan-sou*. There he will be delivered to the local magistrate, who will immediately set him at liberty.

"If hereafter circumstances should arise that shall appear to relate to the object of your first decree, I will, as is my duty, write a faithful report concerning them, which I will address to your Majesty. At the moment when your instructions have reached me the weather

is excessively hot, and the clothing and provisions for the said strangers not yet ready. I, your subject, after having written and sealed this exact and circumstantial report have charged a public functionary to take the Imperial road and conduct them to their destination, by the province of Hou-pé and other places."

This report, which we were only able to procure a year afterwards when we were at Macao, will serve to show the frank and upright character of the viceroy of Sse-tchouen. Not one single word is found in it, to indicate anything of the inveterate antipathy which the Chinese so often cherish towards strangers and Christians, though he could not have imagined that what he had written was ever likely to fall into our hands; and in pronouncing this eulogium on French missionaries, he only yielded honestly to the impulse of genuine conviction.

CHAP. III.

TCHING-TOU-FOU, THE CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE OF SSETCHOU-EN. — NUMEROUS VISITS OF MANDARINS. — CONSTITUTIVE PRINCIPLE OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. — THE EMPEROR. — CURIOUS ORGANISATION OF CHINESE NOBILITY. — CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF PEKIN. — THE SIX SOVEREIGN COURTS. — IMPERIAL ACADEMY. — MONITEUR OF PEKIN. — PROVINCIAL GAZETTES. — ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVINCES. — RAPACITY OF THE MANDARINS. — VENALITY OF JUSTICE. — FAMILY OF A MAGISTRATE — HIS TWO SONS — HIS SCHOOLMASTER. — PRIMARY INSTRUCTION VERY WIDELY DIFFUSED IN CHINA. — CHINESE URBANITY. — SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION. — ELEMENTARY BOOK. — THE FOUR CLASSICAL BOOKS. — THE FIVE SACRED BOOKS. — ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR DEPARTURE. — LAST VISIT TO THE VICEROY.

TCHING-TOU-FOU, the capital of the province of Ssetchouen, is one of the finest towns in the Empire. It is situated in the middle of an admirably fertile plain, watered by beautiful streams, and bounded towards the horizon by hills of graceful and varied forms.

The principal streets are of a good width, paved entirely with large flagstones, and so clean that you can scarcely, as you pass through them, believe yourself to be in a Chinese town.

The shops with their long and brilliant signs, the exquisite order with which the merchandise displayed in them is arranged, the great number and beauty of the tribunals, pagodas, and of what we must call literary institutions,— all contribute to make of Tching-tou-fou a town in some measure exceptional; or at least this is the impression we retained concerning it, when subse-

quently we had visited the most renowned cities of the other provinces.

Our host the magistrate informed us that the present capital of Sse-tchouen was quite a modern town, the old one having been reduced to ashes by a terrible conflagration, and he related to us on this occasion an anecdote or a fable, that we repeat because it is quite in the Chinese taste. Some months before the destruction of the old city, a Bonze was one day seen in the streets, ringing a small bell, and crying out with a loud voice:—*I-ko-jen, leang-ho-yen-tsin*, that is to say — "One man, and two eyes!" At first nobody paid much attention to him. "One man, and two eyes" did not appear a very remarkable phenomenon, and the existence of such a one hardly seemed a truth that deserved to be proclaimed with such solemnity and perseverance. But as the Bonze kept continually repeating his formula from morning till night, people became at last curious to know what he could possibly mean by it. To all questions, however, he would make no other answer than his everlasting "One man, and two eyes."

At last the magistrates took up the matter, but they could make nothing of it. Inquiries were made where this Bonze came from, but nobody knew. No one had ever seen him before; he was never known to eat or drink, and all day long he traversed the streets of the city with a grave face and downcast eyes, ringing his bell and incessantly refreshing the memory of the public concerning "One man, and two eyes." In the evening he disappeared, but no one knew where he went to, to pass the night.

This went on for two months, and people ceased to take any notice of him, setting him down for a very eccentric individual or a madman. But one day it was

noticed that he had not made his appearance; and on that day, towards noon, fire broke out at once, in many parts of the town, with such violence that the inhabitants had only just time to snatch what they considered most valuable, and rush out into the fields. Before the end of the day, the town was a heap of ashes and smoking ruins.

Everybody then recollected the words of the Bonze, which, it seems, were an enigmatical prediction of this frightful catastrophe.

It would be impossible to understand the riddle without having an idea of the form of the Chinese characters, in which the key to it is found. The following character 人 signifies, "man." In adding to it two points, or eyes, you obtain another 火 which signifies "fire;" so that in crying out "One man, and two eyes," the Bonze meant to announce the conflagration that reduced the capital to ashes.

The man who told us this story, could give no further explanation, and we shall take good care ourselves not to attempt any. "The city was entirely rebuilt," he added, "and this is how you come to find it so handsome and regular."

The inhabitants of Tching-tou-fou, are fully worthy of the celebrity of their city. The higher classes, who are very numerous, are remarkable for the elegance of their manners and attire; the middle also rival the higher in politeness and courtesy, and appear also to be in quite easy circumstances. The poor are indeed very numerous, as they are in all the great centres of population in China; but in general it may be said that the inhabitants of this town enjoy a more considerable degree of opulence, than appears in any other place.

The very benevolent reception we had met with from

the viceroy, did not fail to procure us a great number of friends, and place us in relation with the most distinguished persons in the city, as well as with the great functionaries civil and military, the first magistrates of the tribunals, and the chiefs of the learned corporation.

When we were living at the missions in the midst of our Christian communities, we were obliged by our position to keep ourselves at a very respectful distance from the Mandarins and their dangerous neighbourhood. The care for our own safety, and still more that of our neophytes, made this caution indispensable. Like other missionaries, we held intercourse with scarcely any other class than that of peasants and artisans, and it was, therefore, difficult for us to become extensively acquainted with the Chinese as a nation. We were familiar with the manners and habits of the people, their means of existence, and the ties that unite them to each other; but we had no very exact knowledge of the superior classes, or of the aristocratic element that gives impulse, life, and movement to the social body. We perceived effects without knowing the causes.

But the constant communication we had with the Mandarins and the cultivated classes, during our residence at Tching-tou-fou, enabled us to acquire a great amount of useful information on these points, and to study more closely the mechanism and organisation, or rather what constitutes the vitality and strength of a nation. To become acquainted with man, it is not sufficient to observe his movements, and dissect his limbs and organs; one must study and penetrate into his soul, which is the principle of life, and the motive cause of all his actions.

From the thirteenth century, when the first notions of China were brought into Europe by the celebrated Venetian, Marco Polo, up to our own days, all parties seem to have agreed in regarding the Chinese as a very singular people — a people unlike all others. But if we except this one opinion, which is universally received, we scarcely find in what has been written concerning the Chinese, anything but contradictions. Some are in perpetual ecstasy with them; others are constantly heaping upon them abuse and ridicule.

Voltaire has drawn for us an enchanting picture of China, its patriarchal manners, its paternal government, its institutions based on filial piety, and its wise administration always entrusted to the most learned and virtuous men. Montesquieu, on the contrary, has used the darkest colours, and painted them as a miserable abject race, crouching under a brutal despotism, and driven, like a vile herd, by the will of the Emperor.

These two portraits, drawn by the authors of *L'Esprit des Lois*, and *L'Essai sur les Mœurs*, have very little resemblance to the original. There is gross exaggeration on both sides, and the truth is certainly to be sought for between them.

In China, as everywhere else, there is a mixture of what is good and bad, of vice and virtue, that may give occasion to satire or panegyric as the attention is fixed on one or the other. It is easy to find among a people whatever you desire to see in them, if you set out with a preconceived opinion and the resolution to preserve it intact. Thus Voltaire was dreaming of a nation whose annals should be in contradiction with Biblical tradition, a people rationalistic, anti-religious, and whose days

nevertheless flowed on in uninterrupted peace and prosperity. In China he thought he had found this model nation, and he did not fail to recommend it to the admiration of Europe.

Montesquieu, on the other hand, was putting forth his theory of despotic government, and wanted some example to illustrate it. He took the Chinese for this purpose; and showed them trembling under the iron rod of a tyrant, and crushed beneath a pitiless system of legislation.

We intend to enter into some details concerning Chinese institutions and the mechanism of this government, which assuredly does not merit either the invectives that have been poured out on its despotism, or the pompous eulogies that have been pronounced on its antique and patriarchal wisdom. In developing the Chinese governmental system, we shall see that practice is often in contradiction to theory; and that the fine laws found in the books, are not quite so often seen in application.

The idea of the family is the grand principle that serves as the basis of society in China. Filial piety, the constant subject of dissertation to moralists and philosophers, and continually recommended in the proclamations of Emperors and the speeches of Mandarins, has become the fundamental root of all other virtues.

All means are made use of to exalt this sentiment, so as to make of it an absolute passion; it assumes all forms, mingles in all actions, and serves as the moral pivot of public life. Every crime, every attempt against the authority, property, or life of individuals, is treated as filial disobedience; whilst on the other hand, all acts of

virtue, devotion, compassion towards the unfortunate, commercial probity, or even valour in battle, are referred to filial piety; to be a good or a bad citizen, is to be a good or bad son.

The Emperor is the personification of this grand principle, which dominates and penetrates more or less deeply all the strata of society, in this immense agglomeration of three hundred millions of individuals. In the Chinese language he is called *Hoang-te*, August Sovereign, or *Hoang-chou*, August Elevation; but his name *par excellence* is *Tien-dze*, Son of Heaven.

According to the ideas of Confucius and his disciples, the great movements and revolutions of the Empire are under the direct guidance of Heaven; and it is the will of Heaven only, that overthrows some dynasties and substitutes others. Heaven is the true and only master of the Empire, it chooses whom it pleases as its representative, and communicates to him its absolute authority over the people. The sovereignty is a celestial mandate, a holy mission entrusted to an individual for the sake of the community, and withdrawn from him as soon as he shows himself forgetful of his duty and unworthy of his high office. It follows from this political fatalism, that in epochs of revolution the struggles are terrible, until some decided success and evident superiority have become, for the people, a sign of the will of Heaven. Then they rally at once round the new power, and submit to it for a long time without any hesitation.

Heaven, they imagine, had a representative, an adopted son; but it has abandoned him, and withdrawn its credentials; it has chosen another, and he

of course is the one to be obeyed.— This is the whole system.*

The Emperor being the son of Heaven, and consequently according to the Chinese expression, Father and Mother of the Empire, has a right to the respect, the veneration, the worship even of his children. His authority is absolute, it is he who makes and who abolishes the laws, who grants privileges to Mandarins or degrades them, to whom alone belongs the power over life and death, who is the source of all administrative and judicial authority, who has at his disposal the whole power and revenues of the Empire; in one word, the state is the Emperor. His omnipotence, indeed, extends even farther, for he can transmit this enormous power to whom he pleases, and choose his successor among his children, without any law of inheritance imposing a restraint upon him in his choice.

The sovereign power in China is, then, in all respects absolute; but it is not, as has been supposed, for that reason despotic. It is a strong and vast system of centralisation. The Emperor is the head of an immense family; and the absolute authority that belongs to him is not absorbed, but delegated to his ministers, who in their turn transmit their powers to the inferior officers of their administrative governments. The subdivisions of authority thus extend gradually downwards to groups of families, of which the fathers are the natural chiefs, and just as absolute within their sphere as any other. It may well be supposed that this absolute power, being thus infinitely divisible, is no longer equally dangerous; and besides, public opinion is always ready to check any excesses on the part of the Emperor, who would not

* It is in consequence of this theory, that the present pretender has taken the name of *Tien-té*, that is, "Celestial Virtue."

without exciting general indignation, dare to violate the rights of any of his subjects. He has also his private and general councils, the members of which have the right of expressing their opinions, and even remonstrating with him on matters both of public and private concern. One may read in the annals of China, how the censors have often acquitted themselves of their duty, with a freedom and vigour worthy of all praise. Finally, these potentates, the objects of so much homage during their lives, are often after death, like the ancient kings of Egypt, subjected to a trial, the verdict from which is attached to their name and descends to posterity. By these posthumous names only do they become known to history; and as they are always either eulogistic or satirical, they serve to give a brief estimate of the character of their reign.

The greatest counterpoise of the Imperial power consists of the literary aristocracy, or corporation of men of letters; an ancient institution, which has been established on a solid basis, and the origin of which is at least as early as the eleventh century before our era. It may be said that the administration receives all its real and direct influence from this sort of literary oligarchy.

The Emperor can only choose his civil agents among the lettered class, and in conformity with established arrangements. Every Chinese may present himself for the examination for the third literary degree; and those who obtain this, may then become candidates for the second, which opens the way to official employment. To fill the higher offices the prize must be obtained in the competition for the first degree.

It seems, doubtless, a magnificent thing to organise the government of a great Empire by literary qualification;

but though it may be a subject of admiration, it is not to be regarded as a model for imitation in all countries.

The Emperor is recognised by the laws as the sole proprietor of the soil of the Empire; but this is a mere theory, and it does not hinder the property in land from being really as firmly established as it is in Europe. The government, in fact, only possesses the right over it in case of non-payment of the tax, or of confiscation for state crimes.

The villages are collectively responsible to the Exchequer for the discharge of all fiscal impositions, and they have at their head a mayor called *Sian-yo*, who is chosen by universal suffrage.

The communal organisation is perhaps nowhere else as perfect as in China; and these mayors are chosen by the people, without the Mandarins presenting any candidates or seeking in any way to influence the votes.

Every man is both elector and eligible for this office; but it is usual to choose one of advanced age, who both by his character and fortune occupies a high position in the village. We have known many of the Chinese mayors, and we can affirm that in general they are worthy of the suffrages with which they have been honoured by their fellow-citizens. The time for which they are elected varies in the different localities; they are charged with the police duties, and serve also as mediators between the Mandarins and the people, in matters beyond their own competence. We shall have occasion to return to this salutary institution which agrees very ill with the ideas we commonly entertain of the heavy despotism which is supposed to weigh on the Chinese nation.

The corporation of lettered men, recruited every year

by the method of examination, constitutes a privileged class, almost the only nobility recognised in China, and it may be considered as the chief strength and nerve of the Empire. Hereditary titles only exist for the Imperial family, and for the descendants of Confucius, who are still very numerous in the province of *Chang-tong*.

To the hereditary titles which the relations of the Emperor enjoy, there are attached certain prerogatives, as well as a very modest allowance, the right of wearing a red or yellow girdle, of putting a plume of peacock's feathers in their caps, and of having six, eight, or twelve bearers to their palanquins. They cannot, more than any other citizen, pretend to any public office, without having previously taken their literary degree at Pekin and Moukden the capital of Mantchuria. We have often seen these Tatar nobles living in idleness and penury on their small pensions, and having no other proof to show of their illustrious origin than the red or yellow girdle. A private tribunal, however, is charged to govern them and superintend their conduct.

The first civil and military Mandarins who have distinguished themselves in the administration or in war, receive the titles of *koung*, *heon*, *phy*, *tze*, and *nan*; which may be considered as corresponding with those of duke, marquess, count, baron, and knight. These titles or grades are, however, not hereditary, and give no right to the sons of the individual rewarded by them but, what appears to us very curious, they may be carried back to his ancestors. This custom was introduced with reference to the funeral ceremonies and the titles that the Chinese bestow on their defunct relatives. An officer who has been raised in rank by the Emperor, cannot accom-

plish the funeral rites of his family in a suitable manner, if his ancestors have not been decorated with a corresponding title. To suppose that the son is of higher rank than the father, would be to overthrow the hierarchy, and attack the fundamental principle of the Empire. A nobility, not merely confined to the individual, but even retrograding to the ancestors, instead of being transmitted to the descendants, does appear excessively whimsical to us, and one must be a Chinese to have thought of such a thing. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to inquire whether, in reality, it may not be the better plan of the two.

All the officers, civil and military, of the Chinese Empire are divided into nine orders, *khiou-ping*, distinguished one from the other by certain buttons, or rather balls, of the size of a pigeon's egg, which are worn above the official cap. This distinctive ball is of plain red coral for the first order, of carved coral for the second, of a transparent deep blue stone for the third, of pale blue for the fourth, crystal for the fifth, of some opaque white stone for the sixth, and for the seventh, eighth, and ninth of gilt and wrought copper.

Every order is subdivided into two classes; the one active and official, the other supernumerary; but this makes no difference in the balls. All the official personages comprised in these nine orders, are designated by the generic term of *kouang-fou*. The name of Mandarin is unknown to the Chinese; it was invented by the first Europeans who visited the country, and is probably derived from the Portuguese word "*mandar*" to command, out of which they made Mandarin.

The administration of the Celestial Empire is divided into three parts; the superior administration of the

Empire, the local administration of Pekin, and that of the provinces and colonies.

The entire government is under the direction of two councils, attached to the person of the Emperor; the *Nei-ko*, and the *Kiun-ke-tchou*. The first is charged with the preparation of plans, and the despatch of current business. Its duty is, according to the official book, "to put in order, and to make manifest the thoughts and designs of the Imperial will, and to regulate the form of administrative decrees." It may be regarded in some measure as the secretaryship of the Empire.

The second council, named Kiun-ke-tchou, deliberates with the Emperor concerning political affairs; it is composed of members of the Nei-ko, and of the presidents and vice-presidents of the superior courts. The Emperor presides at its sittings, which generally take place very early in the morning.

Below these two general councils are the six sovereign courts or boards, *Leou-pou*, which correspond with our ministries, and take cognisance of all the civil and military affairs of the eighteen provinces of China. At the head of each of these are placed two presidents, the one Chinese, the other Tatar; and four vice-presidents, of whom two are Chinese, and two Tatars. Every board has special offices for the different departments of business, and in these are a great number of divisions and subdivisions.

First. The highest sovereign court, called court of civil employments, *Li-pou*, which has the presentation to civil offices, on the nomination of the Emperor, and the distribution of civil and literary employments throughout the Empire; it has four divisions, which

regulate the order of promotions and changes, keep notes concerning the conduct of official persons, determine their salaries, and their leaves of absence in times of mourning, and distribute the diplomas of posthumous rank, granted to the ancestors of officers admitted into the ranks of the nobility.

Secondly. The court of public revenue, *Hou-pou*, which is occupied with the imposition of taxes and tributes, the distribution of salaries and pensions, the receipt and expenditure of corn and money, and their transport by land and water.

It is also the business of this court to divide the territory of the Empire into provinces, departments, circles, and cantons. It takes the census of the population, keeps the registry of lands, and assesses the taxes and military contingents. This financial court comprises fourteen divisions, which correspond pretty well with the ancient division of China into fourteen interior provinces; besides this, it superintends the tribunal of civil appeal, which decides disputes concerning property and inheritance, it manages the coinage, the manufactories of silk, and the establishments for dyeing; and it looks to the provision of corn for the capital.

It is also this court that regulates the distributions of corn and rice, and the gratuitous loans by which the people are assisted in times of scarcity and famine. Finally, it is honoured with the office of presenting annually to the Emperor the list of young Mantchou girls, who are ambitious to become inmates of his harem.

It is one of the officers of the *Hou-pou* who presides every year at the celebrated agricultural festival, in which the Emperor is seen to put his hand to the plough in a field, trace the furrow, and sow it with corn.

Thirdly. The sovereign court of rites, *Ly-pou*, has the business of regulating ceremonies and public solemnities, the minute details of which are so important in the eyes of the Chinese. It has four divisions, which are occupied with the ordinary and extraordinary ceremonial of the court, with the rites of sacrifices in honour of the souls of former sovereigns and illustrious men, with the regulation of public festivals, and the form of the robes and head-dresses worn by the officers of government. This court superintends schools, public academies, and literary examinations, and determines the number, the choice, and the privileges of the learned of various classes. Foreign diplomacy also lies within its jurisdiction; it prescribes the forms to be observed in the intercourse with tributary princes and foreign potentates, and whatever has relation to the embassies; and finally, it has the general direction of music, which in theory may perhaps be very fine, but does not in China exactly strike one as such in the execution.

Fourthly. There is the supreme court of war, *Ping-pou*, which has also four subdivisions, and regulates the appointment and promotions of military officers, registers the notes furnished concerning their conduct, and attends to the commissariat department, and the punishments and military examinations for the whole army. One of these subdivisions has the special charge of the cavalry, the camels, the relays of horses, and the transport of provisions and ammunition of all kinds.

Fifthly. The court of chastisements or criminal jurisdiction, *Hing-pou*, has eighteen subdivisions, corresponding with the eighteen provinces of the Empire, attending to the criminal business of each province; a

corps of prison inspectors; legislative chambers, which receive the articles of the penal code on their promulgation, and a board of fines and penalties.

Sixthly. The court or board of public works, *Koung-pou*, has the direction of all the works executed at the expense of the state, such as the construction of public buildings, the fabrication of utensils and clothing intended for the troops and for public officers, the digging of canals, the formation of dikes, the erection of funereal monuments for the Imperial family and illustrious persons. It also regulates weights and measures, and directs the manufacture of gunpowder; this supreme court has four divisions.

The superior administration at Pekin comprises also the colonial office, *Ly-fan-yuen*, which has the superintendence of "strangers from without;" a designation applied to the Mongol princes, the Lamas of Thibet, and the Mahometan princes and chiefs of the districts near Persia. The Ly-fan-yuen, which governs the Mongol tribes, regulates, as well as it can, the rather entangled affairs of the nomadic hordes; and interferes, in an indirect manner, in the government of Thibet and the small Mahometan states of Turkestan.

The *Tou-tcha-yuen*, or office of universal censorship, is placed above the sphere of action of all these administrative wheels, and overlooks their movements. Its office is to criticise the manners and morals of the people, and the conduct of the *employés*. The ministers, princes, even the Emperor himself, must, whether he likes it or not, submit to the remonstrances of this censor.

Finally. There is the *Toun-tchin-sse*, or palace of representation, which transmits to the privy-council of the

Emperor, the reports sent from the provinces and the appeals against sentences pronounced by magistrates. This palace of representation, in which are united the members of the six supreme courts and the office of universal censorship, forms a kind of court of cassation to decide on appeals in criminal cases, and on sentences of death. The decisions of these three courts united are required to be unanimously given. In the contrary case, it in the Emperor himself who must be the judge in the last resort.

The famous Imperial academy of *Han-Lin* is composed of literary graduates; it furnishes orators for the public festivals, and literary examiners for the provinces, and is supposed generally to promote the cause of learning and science. It contains within itself a board for the editing of official documents, and another for the revision of the Tatar and Chinese works published at the expense of government. Its two presidents inhabit the Emperor's palace, and they overlook the studies and labours of the academicians. The college of historiographers, and the whole body of annalists, depend on the academy of Han-lin. The first are occupied with drawing up the history of this or that remarkable reign or epoch. The annalists, to the number of twenty-two, write day by day the annals of the reigning dynasty; which are only published when another has succeeded it. They are on duty by turns, four at a time, and remain near the person of the Emperor, to take notes of his actions and even his words.

The official gazette of Pekin may also be counted among the organs of the administration. It is a real *Moniteur Universel*, in which nothing can be printed which has not been presented to the Emperor, or which

does not proceed from the Emperor himself; the editors of it would not dare to change or add anything, but under penalty of the severest punishment. This Pekin gazette is printed every day, in the form of a pamphlet, and contains sixty or seventy pages. The subscription to it does not amount to more than twelve francs a year; and it is a most interesting collection, and very useful in making one acquainted with the Chinese Empire.

It gives a sketch of public affairs and remarkable events; the memorials and petitions presented to the Emperor, and his answers to them; his instructions to the Mandarins and the people; the judicial proceedings, with the principal condemnations and the pardons granted by the Emperor; and also a summary of the deliberations of the sovereign courts. The principal articles, and all the public documents, are reprinted in the official gazettes of the provinces.

Papers thus edited certainly serve to keep the Mandarins and the people acquainted with public affairs; but they are little calculated to excite or encourage political passions. In ordinary times, and when they are not under the influence of any revolutionary movement, the Chinese are not at all inclined to meddle with affairs of government; they are a delightfully quiet people to deal with. In 1851, at the period of the death of the Emperor *Tao-kouang*, we were travelling on the road from Pekin, and one day, when we had been taking tea at an inn in company with some Chinese citizens, we tried to get up a little political discussion.

We spoke of the recent death of the Emperor, an important event which, of course, must have interested everybody. We expressed our anxiety on the subject

of the succession to the Imperial throne, the heir to which was not yet publicly declared. "Who knows," said we, "which of the three sons of the Emperor will have been appointed to succeed him? If it should be the eldest, will he pursue the same system of government? If the younger, he is still very young; and it is said there are contrary influences, two opposing parties, at court — to which will he lean?" We put forward, in short, all kinds of hypotheses, in order to stimulate these good citizens to make some observation. But they hardly listened to us. We came back again and again to the charge, in order to elicit some opinion or other, on questions that really appeared to us of great importance. But to all our piquant suggestions, they replied only by shaking their heads, puffing out whiffs of smoke, and taking great gulps of tea.

This apathy was really beginning to provoke us, when one of these worthy Chinese, getting up from his seat, came and laid his two hands on our shoulders in a manner quite paternal, and said, smiling rather ironically, —

"Listen to me, my friend! Why should you trouble your heart and fatigue your head by all these vain surmises? The Mandarins have to attend to affairs of State; they are paid for it. Let them earn their money, then. But don't let us torment ourselves about what does not concern us. We should be great fools to want to do political business for nothing."

"That is very conformable to reason," cried the rest of the company; and thereupon they pointed out to us that our tea was getting cold and our pipes were out.

The local administration of Pekin comprehends several special institutions, the functions of which have relation

to the Imperial Court, or the district in which it resides, to the direction of the sacrifices, the Imperial stud, and the ceremonial of the Imperial audience-chamber.

The government of the palace is under the direction of a special council, which comprises seven divisions, charged with the provisioning and repairs of the palace, the salaries and punishments for offences committed in it, the receipt of the revenues of the farms, and the superintendence of the flocks and herds of the private domain.

Three great scientific establishments are attached to the court: the National College, where the sons of the great dignitaries are educated; the Imperial College of Astronomy, charged with the astronomical and astrological observations, and the preparation of the annual almanack; and the College of Medicine. Eight hundred guards are attached to the person of the Emperor, and the military service of the capital is confided to the generals of the "Eight Banners" a corps composed of Manchoo, Mongol, and Chinese soldiers, the direct descendants of the army that conquered China in 1643-4. The numerous body of eunuchs employed in the palace, and who, under the preceding dynasty played so active a part in the revolutions of which the Chinese Empire has so often been the theatre, is at present reduced to total inactivity.

Under the minority of *Khang-hi*, the second Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty, the four regents, on whom the government devolved, destroyed the authority of the eunuchs.

Their first act was to pass an express law (which they had engraved on plates of iron of a thousand pounds weight) prohibiting all Mantchoo princes for the future

from elevating eunuchs to any sort of office or dignity, This law has been faithfully observed, and it is perhaps one of the principal causes to which we may attribute the peace and tranquillity China has enjoyed for so long a time.

The provincial administration is constituted with as much vigour and regularity as that of the whole Empire. Every province is governed by a *Tsoung-tou*, or governor-general, whom the Europeans are in the habit of calling viceroy, and also by a *Fou-youen*, or sub-governor. The Tsoung-fou has the general control of all civil and military affairs. The Fou-youen exercises a similar kind of authority, but is more specially charged with the civil administration, which is divided into five departments namely, the executive, the literary, that of the salt duties of the commissariate, and commerce.

The executive department is directed by two superior officers, of whom one undertakes the civil administration properly so called, the other that of criminal law. Under the inspection of these officers, who render an account to the governor and under governor, every province is divided into prefectures, administered by civil officers, whose functions correspond with those of our prefects, and sub-prefects.

The Chinese distinguish, first, the great prefectures named *Fou*, which have a special administration under the inspection of the superior government of the province; secondly, the prefecture called *Tcheou*, the functionaries of which depend sometimes on the provincial administration, and sometimes on that of the grand prefecture; and, finally, the sub-prefecture *Hien*, below both the Fou and the Tcheou. Each of these three, the Fou and Tcheou and the Hien, possess a kind of chief town,

surrounded by walls and fortifications, where the authorities reside.

These are the towns of the first, second, and third order, of which mention is so often made in the accounts of the Missionaries.

The chief officers of the prefectures and sub-prefectures are charged with the collection of the taxes and the police duty.

Secondly. The literary department of every province is conducted by a director of instruction, who delegates his authority to the principal professor residing in the chief towns of the prefecture and sub-prefectures. They have under them secondary masters, who are distributed throughout the cantons. Every year the director of instruction makes a tour to examine students and confer the first literary degree. Every three years examiners are sent from the academy of the *Han-lin*, at Pekin, to preside over the extraordinary examinations, and confer the second literary degree; and after that the literary graduates have to go to Pekin to pass their examination for the third degree.

Thirdly. The department of the salt duties has under its inspection the salt-marshes, as well as the reservoirs and wells, and also has to undertake the transport of the salt.

Fourthly. The department of the commissariate has to attend to the preservation of the corn in which the greater part of the taxes is paid, and to effect its transport to the capital.

Fifthly. The department of commerce has to collect the dues in the sea-ports and on the navigable rivers. The maintenance of the dykes on the Yellow River is entrusted to a special board, which forms, in the pro-

vinces of *Tchi*, *Chan-toung* and *Ho-nan*, a body independent of the provincial administration.

The military government of each province, which is placed, like the civil administration, under the authority of the viceroy, has the command of the land and sea forces. In general, the Chinese make little distinction between the two services, and the several ranks have the same names in both. The generals in the Chinese army are called *Ti-tou;* they are sixteen in number, and two belong exclusively to the marine force.

These generals have each their head-quarters, where they collect the greater part of their brigade, and they distribute the rest through the different posts under their command. Besides these, various fortresses of the Empire are occupied by Tartar troops, commanded by a *Tsiang-kiung*, who obeys no one but the Emperor, and whose business it is to watch over and keep in respect the high civil functionaries, who might be meditating treason or revolt. The admirals (*Ti-tou*) and vice-admirals (*Tsoung-ping*) reside constantly on shore, and leave the command of their squadrons to the subordinate officers.

Below these superior officers, in the various branches of the administration, is an enormous mass of subaltern functionaries, whose names and titles are scrupulously inscribed in the "Book of Places." This kind of Imperial almanack, which is printed anew every three months, and is perfectly authentic, would give an excellent idea of the entire *personnel* of Chinese administration.

From this slight sketch of the political system of the Empire, it will readily be perceived, that, absolute as

88230

the government is, it is not on that account necessarily tyrannical. If it were, it would probably long since have ceased to exist; for, it is not easy to conceive that three hundred millions of men could be ruled arbitrarily and despotically for many successive centuries, let them be ever so apathetic and brutalised — and assuredly the Chinese are neither the one nor the other.

To maintain order amidst these terrific masses of people, nothing less was needed than that powerful system of centralisation which was invented by the founders of the Chinese monarchy, and which the numerous revolutions by which it has been agitated have only modified, without ever disturbing from the foundations.

Under shelter of these strong, energetic, and, one may say, learnedly-combined institutions, the Chinese have been able to live in peace, and enjoy some tolerable sort of happiness, which after all is perhaps the most that man in this world can reasonably pretend to.

The annals of China resemble those of most other nations; they contain a mixture of good and evil — an alternation of peaceable and happy periods with others that were agitated and miserable: governments probably will never be found perfect, till the day when men shall be born free from faults.

It is impossible, however, to disguise from one's self, that the Chinese do appear at present to have arrived at one of those epochs in which the evil has gained the ascendant over the good. Morality, arts, industry, all seem to be on the decline, and poverty and destitution are making rapid progress.

We have seen the most frightful corruption penetrating the whole mass of society — magistrates selling

justice to the highest bidder; Mandarins of every degree, instead of protecting the people, oppressing and pillaging them by every means in their power.

But ought these disorders and abuses that have glided into the exercise of power to be attributed to the form of the Chinese government? One can hardly think that. These abuses depend mostly on causes that we shall have occasion to point out in the course of our narrative; but however that may be, it cannot be disputed, that the mechanism of the Chinese government deserves to be studied carefully, and without prejudice, by the politicians of Europe.

We must not wholly despise the Chinese; there may be even much that is admirable and instructive in their ancient and curious institutions, based upon literary qualification, by which it has been found possible to grant, in the communes, universal suffrage to three hundred millions of men, and to render every distinction accessible to all classes. During our stay at Tching-tou-fou, we had an opportunity not only of making acquaintance with the high functionaries of the city, but of studying also the manners and habits of the Chinese Mandarin in private life, and in the bosom of his family. The magistrate in whose house we were lodged, was named *Pao-ngan*, that is "Hidden Treasure." He was a man of about fifty years of age, of a fine figure, robust health, and plump enough to obtain the frequent compliments of his colleagues. His strongly-marked features, brown complexion, thick moustache, guttural pronunciation, and continual complaints of the heat, pointed him out as a native of the north. He was, in fact, from the province of *Chan-si*; his father had held some high offices, but he himself had never been able to

rise above the simple magistracy, and even that he had attained only a few years before. He took good care not to attribute this small progress to want of success in the literary examinations, but, like most other men, preferred laying the blame on the injustice of men, and his own bad star, which took a pleasure in throwing him out of the road to honour and fortune. If you would believe him, his name was most exactly descriptive, and he was, in the full extent of the term, a "Hidden Treasure."

Although somewhat inclined to doleful lamentation, Pao-ngan was, on the whole, a very good fellow, and took the trials and vicissitudes of this nether world pretty easily. He had come into office rather late, and only when his days were on the decline, but he certainly did his utmost to make up for lost time.

He loved law to the bottom of his heart, and never failed to make the most of it. He had two or three kinds of myrmidons constantly employed in rummaging up, in all quarters of the town, all the little affairs that could be brought within his jurisdiction, and his good humour increased with the number he had on his hands.

Such an eagerness for the fulfilment of duties that are mostly considered troublesome and annoying, could not but appear to us very edifying, and we found ourselves charitably disposed to admire in Pao-ngan his extraordinary passion for justice. But he speedily undeceived us, by very frankly declaring that he wanted money, and that a well-managed cause was the best means of procuring it. "If it is allowable," said he, "to make a fortune by trade and commerce, why may one not also grow rich by teaching reason to the people, and developing the principles of justice?"

These not very elevated sentiments are common to all the Mandarins, and they express them openly and without scruple. The administration of justice has become a regular traffic, and the chief cause of this abuse, we really believe, is to be found in the insufficient remuneration allotted by government to magistrates. It is extremely difficult for them to live in suitable style, with the palanquins, and servants, and the costume suitable to their position, if they have nothing more to meet all these expences than the slender resources granted to them by the State. Their subordinates have no pay at all, and have to indemnify themselves as well as they can, by exercising their industry on the unlucky suitors who pass through their hands—veritable sheep, from whom every one snatches as much wool as he can tear off, and who are not unfrequently at last completely flayed.

Towards the commencement of the present dynasty, these abuses had become so flagrant, and the complaints on the subject so unanimous throughout the Empire, that the cantons drew up a memorial against the country tribunals, and presented it to the Emperor *Tchang-hi*. The answer was soon given, and a curious one it was. "The Emperor, considering the immense population of the Empire, the great division of territorial property, and the notoriously law-loving character of the Chinese, is of opinion that law-suits would tend to increase, to a frightful amount, if people were not afraid of the tribunals, and if they felt confident of always finding in them ready and perfect justice. As man" continues the Imperial logician "is apt to delude himself concerning his own interests, contests would be then interminable, and the half of the Empire would not suffice to settle the

law-suits of the other half. I desire, therefore, that those who have recourse to the tribunals should be treated without any pity, and in such a manner that they shall be disgusted with law, and tremble to appear before a magistrate. In this manner the evil will be cut up by the roots; the good citizens, who may have difficulties among themselves, will settle them like brothers, by referring to the arbitration of some old man, or the mayor of the commune. As for those who are troublesome, obstinate, and quarrelsome, let them be ruined in the law-courts — that is the justice that is due to them."

One cannot, perhaps, altogether admit the validity of this Imperial reasoning, but it is nevertheless undoubtedly true, that in China, those who haunt the tribunals, and get themselves ruined, and not unfrequently knocked down also, by the Mandarins, are, with some honourable exceptions, men of a vindictive and malignant character, to whom no counsel can be of service, and who have need to be chastised by their "father and mother." *

Pao-ngan the "Hidden Treasure," for his part, followed scrupulously the gracious instructions of the Emperor Khang-hi. Since he had been installed in his little tribunal, he dreamed of nothing but of fleecing suitors; but it is most likely nevertheless that this was not solely with the philanthropic purpose of diminishing their numbers. One day, when we were asking from him some information with respect to the capital of *Sse-lihuen*, he mentioned to us a certain district as being the worst in the town. We supposed, of course, that this abominable quarter was the resort of all sorts of bad characters, but it was precisely the contrary.

* A title given by the Chinese to their magistrates.

"Since I have been in the magistracy," said Pao-ngan, with delightful naïveté, "that district has never given me a single suit; concord reigns among all the families in it."

This excellent magistrate had two sons, who aspired to follow in their father's footsteps, but it seemed likely they would never attain to the honour of placing any kind of ball on their caps. The elder, who was twenty-three years of age, and already the father of a little citizen of the Chinese Empire, who trotted about and prattled very prettily, had an exceedingly stupid though conceited face, which afforded a very just idea of his intellectual pretensions. He had been studying all his life, and was apparently a student still, but the degree of Bachelor was an honour he had not yet attained. His papa, the "Hidden Treasure," frankly admitted that his eldest son was not remarkably clever.

The younger, a lad of seventeen, was pale and feeble, and evidently consumptive, but as amiable and interesting as his elder brother was tiresome. He was well informed too, and far from unintelligent, and he had a soft, melancholy tone in his voice that added to the charm of his conversation.

If to this "Hidden Treasure" and his family be added our two guards of honour, the youthful consumer of opium, and the ancient chewer of melon-seeds, a good idea will be formed of the society in which we found ourselves. It was a curious thing enough for two French missionaries to be living thus familiarly with Mandarins in the middle of a great Chinese town, on the confines of Thibet, ten thousand leagues from their own country, whilst their fate was being decided in a discussion between the viceroy of the province and the Court of Pekin.

The life of a Chinese Mandarin appeared to us a very leisurely one. At sunrise, Pao-ngan installed himself on his judge's seat, and passed the first hours of the morning in administering justice, or, more properly speaking, in arranging and legalising the extortions of his scribes. After this rather superfluous labour came the great affairs of the day, namely, breakfast, dinner and supper. Pao-ngan kept a very good table, as he received an extra allowance on our account; but, ample as it was, the unfortunate man could not, after the third day, resist putting water into the excellent rice-wine, in order to squeeze a little more profit out of us. It seems as if a Chinese really must make use of some kind of fraud and trickery; every unlawful gain has for him such an irresistible attraction. In the intervals between his meals, the occupations of Pao-ngan were not very laborious; he smoked, he drank tea, he amused himself with munching dried fruits, or fragments of sugar-cane; or he dozed upon a divan, or fanned himself with large palm-leaves, or possibly played a game of cards or chess. Then some other Mandarin, as idle as himself, would come sauntering in, and they would sit down together, and mourn over the inconveniences and toils of public life.

Such was the life of our legal functionary. We never surprised him so much as a single time with a pen or a book in his hand.

It may be supposed that all Chinese official personages are not precisely like Pao-ngan. We have known some who were, on the contrary, active, intelligent and studious, and constantly stimulated by the hope of advancement in their career.

During our residence in this family, we used, when

we became too weary of our habitual company, to go and take refuge with a personage who passed the greater part of the day at the house. This was a venerable graduate of letters, the tutor of the "Hidden Treasure's" children. We used to talk to him of Europe, and he, in return, told us stories of China, which he seasoned plentifully with sentences from the classic authors of his country. This learned Chinese resembled very much those erudite personages of former days whose conversation was always bristling with quotations from Latin and Greek. In France the race is almost extinct, but it is still flourishing in full vigour in China. The man of learning is accustomed to present himself with a considerable amount of easy assurance, indeed with not a little vanity and pomposity, so convinced is he of his own value.

He is the diapason of every conversation, for he is erudite, and moreover a fine speaker. His vocal organ is mostly of a marvellous flexibility, and he has the habit of accompanying his words with much stately gesticulation, of emphasising many of them, and indulging in great variety of intonation.

His language, being in a very sublime style, is not always very intelligible; but that is perhaps rather an advantage, as it gives him an opportunity of assisting the comprehension of his hearers, by describing, with his finger in the air, explanatory characters. If any one else begins to talk in his presence, he listens to him with a shake of the head, and a compassionate smile that seems to say, "Well! Well! you have not the gift of eloquence."

But when one of these erudite gentlemen fills the office of tutor, although at bottom he may have the

same amount of conceit, he is forced to put on a little modesty over it; for he understands very well the imprudence of displaying his pride before those who require his services.

These *magistri* form in China an extremely numerous class. They are usually men of no fortune, who not having been able to attain to the dignity of the mandarinate, are obliged to resort to this method of obtaining their living. It is not necessary to have passed all the examinations in order to become a *magister*, for in China education is quite free, and any one is at liberty to set up a school, without the government interfering with him in any way whatever. The interest a father must feel in the education of his children is supposed to be a sufficient guarantee for his choice of a master.

The heads of the villages and of the different districts of the cities assemble when they wish to found a school, and deliberate on the choice of a master, and the salary that is to be allowed him.

They then prepare a local habitation for it and open the classes. If the *magister* does not continue to please those who have chosen him, they dismiss him, and choose another. The government has only an indirect influence over the schools, through the examinations of those who aspire to enter the corporation of letters. They are obliged to study the classical authors upon which they have to be examined; but the uniformity that is seen in Chinese schools is rather the result of custom, and general agreement of the people, than of legal prescription. In our Catholic schools the Chinese professors explain the Christian doctrine freely to their pupils, without any other control than that of the vicar apostolic or the

Missionary. The rich are very much in the habit of having for their children private tutors, who give them lessons at home, and often lodge in the family.

Of all countries in the world China is assuredly the one in which primary instruction is most widely diffused. There is no little village, not even a group of farms, in which a teacher is not to be found. He resides most frequently in the Pagoda; and for his maintenance he has usually the revenue of a foundation, or sometimes a kind of tithe paid by the farmers after the harvest.

The schools are rather less numerous in the northern provinces; it almost seems as if the intellects of the people were rendered duller and heavier by the rigour of the climate.

The people of the south, on the contrary, are acute and lively, and devote themselves with ardour to literary studies. With some few exceptions, every Chinese knows how to read and write, at least sufficiently for the ordinary occasions of life. Thus the workmen, the peasants even, are capable of taking notes concerning their daily affairs, of carrying on their own correspondence, of reading the proclamations of the Mandarins, and often also the productions of the current literature.

Primary instruction has even made its way into the floating dwellings, which cover by thousands the rivers, lakes, and canals of the Celestial Empire. One is sure of finding in their little barques, a writing-desk, an arithmetical machine, an annual register, some of the little brushes that supply the place of pens, and some pamphlets which in their moments of leisure the mariners amuse themselves by deciphering. The Chinese tutor is charged not only with the instruction, but also with the education of his pupils. He has to teach them the

principles of politeness, to train them to the practice of the ceremonial of public and private life, to show them the various modes of salutation, and the deportment they have to observe towards their relations, their superiors and their equals.

The Chinese have been much reproached for their absurd attachment to frivolous ceremonies, and the minutiæ of etiquette. People have been pleased to represent them as always moving in a grave, solemn manner, after the fashion of automata, executing in their friendly salutations only certain manœuvres prescribed by the law, and addressing each other in stiff formulas of courtesy learnt by heart from the ritual. The Chinese of the lower class, the palanquin bearers, and street porters of great towns, have been supposed to be always prostrating themselves to each other, and asking ten thousand pardons, after having been abusing or even knocking each other down. These extravagances are not really to be met with in China; they are to be found only in the accounts of Europeans, who seem to think themselves obliged, in speaking of a country so little known, to relate many strange things. Setting aside all exaggeration, however, it is certain that urbanity is among the Chinese a distinctive sign of national character.

A fondness for polite and decorous observance may be traced among them from the remotest antiquity, and their ancient philosophers never fail to recommend to the people a strict observance of the precepts established for the relations of society. Confucius said that ceremonies are the symbols of virtue, and destined to preserve it, to recall it to memory, and even sometimes to supply its place. These principles being among the earliest inculcated by schoolmasters on the minds of their pupils, it is not surprising that we find in all ranks of society

manners which display more or less of that politeness which is the basis of Chinese education ; and even the country people and peasants certainly treat each other with more respect and decorum than would be manifested among the laborious classes of Europe.

In their official reports, and on solemn occasions, the Chinese have certainly too much of stiffness and bombastic grimace, and are too much the slaves of ceremonious etiquette. The regulation tears and groans of their funeral ceremonies, their emphatic protestations of affection, respect, and devotion to people they despise and detest, the pressing invitations to dinner, given on condition of not being accepted ; all these are excesses and abuses common enough, but which were even noticed and blamed by Confucius himself. This rigid observer of "The Rites," has somewhere said that, with respect to ceremonies, it is better to be a miser than a prodigal, especially if in practising them one has not the feeling in the heart that alone confers on them merit and importance.

Apart from these public demonstrations, in which there is often a good deal of constraint and affectation, the Chinese are not deficient in openness and freedom of deportment. When they have pulled off their satin boots, and laid aside their robes of state and their official hats, they become men of the world ; and in the habitual intercourse of daily life they know how to release themselves from the bonds of etiquette, and indulge in social recreation, in which the conversation is seasoned, as among ourselves, with gaiety and pleasant trifling. Friends meet in an unceremonious way to tea or warm wine, or perhaps to smoke the excellent tobacco of Leao-

tong; and sometimes on such occasions they amuse themselves by guessing riddles and making puns.

The chief branch of instruction in the Chinese schools is that of reading and writing, or painting the Chinese characters. To exercise the hand of the pupil, they oblige him to practise, first the elementary forms that enter into the composition of the letter, and then to proceed gradually to more complicated combinations. When he can make a firm and easy stroke with the pencil, beautiful examples of various styles of writing are given to him to copy. The master corrects the work of the pupil in red ink, improving the badly drawn letters, and pointing out the various beauties and imperfections in the copy. The Chinese set great value on fine writing; and a good calligrapher, or, as they say, "an elegant pencil," is always much admired.

For the knowledge and good pronunciation of the character, the master, at the beginning of the lesson, repeats a certain number to each pupil, according to his capacity. They then all return to their places, repeating their lesson in a chanting tone, and rocking themselves backwards and forwards. The uproar and confusion of a Chinese school, in which every pupil is vociferating his own particular monosyllables in his own particular tone, without at all troubling himself about his neighbour, may easily be imagined. Whilst they are thus chanting and rocking about, the master of the school, like the leader of a band, keeps his ears pricked and attentive to all that is going on, shouting out his amendments from time to time to those who are missing the true intonation. As soon as a pupil thinks he has his lesson perfectly impressed on his memory, he goes up to the master, makes a low bow, presents his

book, turns his back, and repeats what he has learnt. This is what they call *pey-chou*, "turning the back on a book;" that is, saying a lesson.

The Chinese character is so large, and so easy to distinguish, even at a great distance, that this method does not appear superfluous, if the point is to ascertain whether the pupil is really repeating from memory. The bawling and rocking themselves about is considered to lessen the fatigue of study.

The first book that is placed in the hands of scholars is a very ancient and popular work, entitled *San-dze-king*, or Sacred Trimetrical Book. The author has named it thus because it is divided into little couplets, each verse of which is composed of three characters or words. The hundred and seventy-eight verses contained in the San-dze-king form a kind of encyclopædia, in which children find a concise and admirable summary of the chief branches of knowledge that constitute Chinese science.

It treats of the nature of man, of the various modes of education, of the importance of the social duties, of numbers and their origin, of the three great powers, of the four seasons, of the five cardinal points, of the five elements, of the five constant virtues, of the six kinds of corn, of the six classes of domestic animals, of the seven dominant passions, of the eight notes of music, of the nine degrees of relationship, of the ten relative duties, of studies and academical compositions, of general history and the succession of dynasties, and the work concludes with reflections and examples on the necessity and importance of study in general. It may well be imagined that a treatise of this kind, well learnt by the pupils, and properly applied by the master, must greatly develope the intellects of Chinese children, and

favour their natural taste for the acquisition of serious and positive knowledge. The San-dze-king is worthy in all respects of the immense popularity it enjoys. The author, a disciple of Confucius, commences with a distich, the profound and traditional sense of which is very striking—*Jen-dze-tsou-sin-pen-chan*, "Man in the beginning was of a nature essentially holy." But it is probable that the Chinese understand very little the tendency and the consequences of the thought expressed in these two lines.

A learned Christian has composed for the schools of our missions a little theological encyclopædia on the model of the San-dze-king. The verses are formed of four words; and it is for this reason he has given it the title Sse-dze-king, or Sacred Book in Four Characters.

After the trimetrical encyclopædia the *Sse-chou*, or Four Classical Books, are placed in the hands of the pupils. Of these we will endeavour to give some brief idea. The first is the *Ta-hio*, or Grand Study; a kind of treatise on politics and morals, composed from the very concise text of Confucius, by one of his disciples; and the grand principle inculcated in it is self-improvement. These are the words of Confucius:—

I.

"The law of the Grand Study, or practical philosophy, consists in developing the luminous principle of reason, which we have received from Heaven, for the regeneration of man, and in placing his final destiny in perfection, or the sovereign good.

II.

"We must first know the goal towards which we are tending, or our definitive destination. This being known, we may afterwards maintain the calmness and tranquillity of our minds. The mind being calm and tranquil, we may afterwards enjoy that unalterable repose which nothing can trouble. Having then attained to the enjoyment

of the unalterable repose which nothing can trouble, we may afterwards meditate and form our judgment on the essence of things; and having formed our judgments of the essence of things, we may then attain to the desired perfection.

III.

"The beings of nature have causes and effects; human actions, principles and consequences. To know causes and effects, principles and consequences, is to approach very nearly to the rational method by which perfection is attained.

IV.

"The ancient princes who desired to develope in their states the luminous principle of reason that we have received from Heaven, endeavoured first to govern well their kingdoms; those who desired to govern well their kingdoms, endeavoured first to keep good order in their families; those who desired to keep good order in their families, endeavoured first to correct themselves; those who desired to correct themselves, endeavoured first to give uprightness to their souls; those who desired to give uprightness to their souls, endeavoured first to render their intentions pure and sincere; those who desired to render their intentions pure and sincere, endeavoured to perfect, as much as possible, their moral knowledge, and examine thoroughly their principles of action.

V.

"The principles of action being thoroughly examined, the moral knowledge attains the highest degree of perfection; the moral knowledge having attained the highest degree of perfection, the intentions are rendered pure and sincere; the intentions being rendered pure and sincere, the soul is penetrated with probity and uprightness, and the mind is afterwards corrected and improved; the mind being corrected and improved, the family is afterwards better managed; the family being better managed, the kingdom is afterwards well governed; and the kingdom being well governed, the world enjoys harmony and peace.

VI.

"All men, the most elevated in rank as well as the most humble and obscure, are equally bound to perform their duty. The correction and

amelioration of one's self, or self-improvement, is the basis of all progress, and of all moral developement.

VII.

"It is not in the nature of things but that whatever has its basis in disorder and confusion, should also have what necessarily results from that. To treat lightly what is the principal or most important thing, and seriously what is only secondary, that is a method of action we ought never to follow."

As we have said, the Book of the Grand Study is composed of the preceding text, with a commentary in ten chapters by a disciple of Confucius. The commentator exerts himself especially to apply the doctrine of his master to political government, which Confucius defines as what is *just* and *right*, and which he supposes founded on the consent of the people. The formula in the Grand Study is as follows:—

"Obtain the affection of the people, and thou wilt obtain the empire!
Lose the affection of the people, and thou wilt lose the empire!"

The Book of the Grand Study concludes in these words:—

"If those who govern states only think of amassing riches for their personal use, they will infallibly attract towards them depraved men; these depraved men will make the sovereign believe that they are good and virtuous; and these depraved men will govern the kingdom. But the administration of these unworthy ministers will call down the chastisements of Heaven, and excite the vengeance of the people. When matters have reached this point, what ministers, were they ever so good and virtuous, could avert misfortune? Therefore, those who govern kingdoms ought never to make their private fortune out of the public revenues; but their only riches should be justice and equity."

The second classical book, *Tchoung-young*, or The

Invariable Centre, is a treatise on the conduct of wise men in life. It has been edited by a disciple of Confucius, according to instructions received from the lips of the master himself. The system of morals contained in this book is based on the principle, that virtue is always at an equal distance from two extremes—*In medio consistit virtus.* This harmonious centre, *Ching-ho*, is the source of the true, the beautiful and the good.

I.

"The disciple *Sse-lou* inquires of his master concerning the strength of man.

II.

"Confucius replies: 'Is it concerning manly strength in northern or in southern countries that you wish to inquire? Is it of your own strength?'

III.

"To have gentle and benevolent manners for the instruction of men—to have compassion towards those madmen who revolt against reason,—this is the manly strength proper to southern countries; it is that which the wise endeavour to attain.

IV.

"To make one's couch on steel blades and skins of wild beasts—to contemplate without shuddering the approach of death,—this is the manly strength proper to northern countries, and it is that which the brave endeavour to attain.

V.

"But much stronger and much grander is the power of soul belonging to the sage who lives always at peace with men, and who does not allow himself to be corrupted by passion. Much stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who keeps always in the straight path, equally distant from the two extremes. Much stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who, when his country is in the enjoyment of a good government, which is his work, does not allow himself to be corrupted or blinded by a foolish pride. Much

stronger and grander is the power of soul in him who, when his country, being lawless, has not a good government, remains immovable in his virtue till death."

Confucius, in his Invariable Centre, as in his other treatises, endeavours to apply his ethical principles to politics. These are the conditions on which he allows to sovereigns the right of governing nations and giving them institutions: —

I.

"It is only the man supremely holy, who, by the faculty of knowing thoroughly, and comprehending perfectly, the primitive laws of living beings, is worthy of possessing supreme authority and commanding men, — who, by possessing a soul, grand, firm, constant, and imperturbable, is capable of making justice and equity reign, — who, by his faculty of being always honest, simple, upright, grave, and just, is capable of attracting respect and veneration, — who, by his faculty of being clothed with the ornaments of the mind and the talents procured by assiduous study, and by the enlightenment that is given by an exact investigation of the most hidden things and the most subtle principles, — is capable of discerning with accuracy the true from the false, and good from evil.

II.

"His faculties are so ample, so vast, so profound, that he is like an immense spring, whence all issues in due season.

III.

"They are vast and extensive as the heavens; the hidden source whence they flow is deep as the abyss. Let this man supremely holy appear with his virtues, and his powerful faculties, and the nations will not fail to have faith in his words. Let him act, and the nations will not fail to be in joy.

IV.

"It is thus that the renown of his virtues will be like an ocean, inundating the empire in every part. It will extend even to the barbarians of the north and the south. Wherever vessels or chariots

can reach, — wherever the power of human industry can penetrate, — in all the places which the heavens cover with their immense canopy, — on all points that the earth contains, which the sun and the moon enlighten with their rays, — which the dew and the clouds of morning fertilise, — all human beings who live and breathe can never fail to love and to revere him."

The third classical book, *Lun-yu*, or Philosophical Conversations, is a collection of maxims put together in rather a confused manner, and of recollections of the discourses of Confucius with his disciples. Among a great number of common-places on morals and politics, are some profound thoughts, and some curious details concerning the character and manners of Confucius, who seems to have been something of an original. Thus, the Lun-yu informs us that the master, in introducing his guests, kept his arms stretched out like the wings of a bird; that he would never eat meat that was not cut in a straight line; that if the mat on which he was to sit down was not regularly placed, he would not take it; that he would point to nothing with his fingers, &c.

Finally, the fourth classical book is that of *Meng-tze*, or Mincius, as he is called by Europeans. This work, divided into two parts, contains the summary of the counsels addressed by this celebrated philosopher to the princes of his time and his disciples. Mincius has been decorated by his countrymen with the title of Second Sage, Confucius being the first; and they render to him, in the great Hall of the Learned, the same honours as to Confucius. This is what a Chinese author says of the Book of Mincius:—"The subjects treated in this work are of various natures. In one part are examined the virtues of individual life and of domestic relations; in another the order of affairs. Here are investigated the duties of superiors, from the sovereign to the lowest

magistrate, for the attainment of good government. There the toils of students, labourers, artisans, traders, are exhibited; and in the course of the work the laws of the physical world, of the heavens and the earth, the mountains and rivers, of birds, quadrupeds, fish, insects, plants, trees, are occasionally described. A great number of affairs that Mincius managed, in the course of his life, in his intercourse with men, his occasional discourses with people of rank, his instructions to his pupils, his explanations of books, antient and modern,—all these things are incorporated in this publication.

"It is a collection of historical facts and of the words of ancient sages, uttered for the instruction of mankind."

M. Abel Remusat has thus characterised the two most celebrated philosophers of China:—

"The style of Meng-tze, less elevated and less concise than that of the prince of letters, Confucius, is more flowery and elegant, and also not deficient in nobleness. The form of dialogue, which he has preserved in his Philosophical Conversations with the great persons of his times, allows of more variety than one can expect to find in the apophthegms and maxims of Confucius. The character of their philosophy also differs widely. Confucius is always grave, even austere. He extols the virtuous, of whom he draws an ideal portrait, and only speaks of the vicious with cold indignation. Meng-tze, with the same love of virtue, seems to have more contempt for than hatred of vice. He attacks it by the force of reason, and does not disdain even to employ the weapon of ridicule. His manner of arguing approaches the irony attributed to Socrates. He does not contend with his adversaries; but endeavours, while granting their premises, to draw from them absurd consequences, that he

may cover them with confusion. He does not even spare the princes and great men of his time, who often only feigned to consult him, in order to have an opportunity of boasting of their conduct, or to obtain from him eulogiums that they supposed themselves to merit. Nothing can be more piquant than the answers he sometimes gives them on such occasions, and nothing more opposed to the too generally entertained opinion of the baseness and servility of orientals, and especially of the Chinese.

"Meng-tze dees not resemble Aristippus so much as Diogenes, but without violating decency and decorum. His liveliness does sometimes appear of rather too tart a quality, but he is always inspired by zeal for the public good.

"The pupils in Chinese schools learn these books at first by heart, without troubling themselves with the sense or meaning of the author; and if they attach any ideas to his words they are indebted merely to their own sagacity. It is only when they are capable of repeating the whole, from one end to the other, that the master sets to work, with the assistance of innumerable commentaries, to develope the text, word by word, and give the necessary explanation; and the philosophical opinions of Confucius and Meng-tze are then expounded, in a manner more or less superficial, according to the age and capacity of the pupil."

After the four classical books, the Chinese study the five sacred books, *King*, which are the most ancient monuments of Chinese literature, and contain the fundamental principles of the earliest creeds and customs. The first in date, the most renowned, but the least intelligible of these sacred books is the Book of Changes,

y-King. This is a treatise on divination, founded on the combinations of sixty-four lines (some entire, others broken), and called *koua*, the discovery of which is attributed to *Fou-hi*, the founder of Chinese civilisation. Fou-hi is said to have found these mysterious lines, which he says are capable of explaining all things, on the shell of a tortoise. But Confucius, whose capacity and talents were so extraordinary, studied these enigmatical *koua* very assiduously, and went through much labour in editing the y-King, without being able to throw much light upon the matter. After Confucius, the number of writers who have had the weakness to occupy themselves seriously with the y-King, is almost incredible. The Imperial Catalogue enumerates more than 1450 treatises, in the form of memoirs, or commentaries, upon this famous, but whimsical work.

The *Chou-king*, or Book of History, is the second sacred book. Confucius has collected in this important work the historical recollections of the first dynasties of China as far as the eighth century before our era. It contains the speeches addressed by several emperors of these dynasties to their great officers, and furnishes a great number of precious documents concerning the first ages of the Chinese nation.

The third sacred book is the *Che-king*, or Book of Verses; a collection, made also by Confucius, of ancient national and official songs, from the eighteenth to the third century before our era; and there is found in it very interesting and authentic information on the ancient manners of China. The Book of Verses is often quoted and commented on in the philosophical writings of Meng-tze and of Confucius, who recommends it to his disciples. He says, in the Lun-yu, "My dear disciples,

why do you not study the Book of Verses ? The Book of Verses is proper for elevating your sentiments and ideas; it is fitted for forming your judgment by the contemplation of things; it is good for uniting men in mutual harmony, and for exciting regret without resentment."

The fourth sacred book is the *Li-ki*, or Book of Rites. The original was lost in the conflagration of ancient books ordered by the Emperor *Thsin-che-Hoang*, at the end of the third century before our era. The present ritual is a collection of fragments; the most ancient of which do not appear to date from an earlier epoch than that of Confucius.

Finally, the fifth sacred book is the *Tchun-thsiou*, or the Book of Spring and Autumn, written by Confucius; and which takes its name from the two seasons of the year in which it was commenced and finished. It contains the annals of the little kingdom of *Lou*, the native country of this philosopher, from the year 292 to 480 before our era. Confucius wrote it to recal the princes of his time to respect for ancient customs, by pointing out the misfortunes that had happened to their predecessors since these customs had fallen into desuetude.

These five sacred and four classical books are the basis of all science among the Chinese. What one finds in them is, it must be confessed, but little suited to the tastes or wants of Europeans. It would be vain to seek in them for scientific ideas; and, with some truths of great importance in politics and morals, one is confounded by finding mingled the grossest errors and the most absurd fables. Chinese instruction nevertheless, taken on the whole, tends wonderfully to create in the mind an

attachment to ancient customs, and a profound respect for authority ; two things which have always been the twin pillars of Chinese society, and which alone can serve to explain the duration of this ancient civilisation. We shall not enter here into any further details concerning the education and literature of the Chinese, since we shall have to return to the subject on several other occasions.

We had been about fifteen days at Tching-tou-fou, and, as we were beginning to be exceedingly tired of it, we managed to intimate to the viceroy our desire to resume our journey. He replied very graciously, that it would give him pleasure if we would prolong our period of repose, but that we were entirely free, and might ourselves fix the day of our departure. The Magistrate Pao-ngan did his utmost to detain us, and put in operation all the resources of his insinuating and pathetic eloquence, conjuring us to stay a little longer, if we would not "rend his heart." We on our side had to explain to him the depth of grief into which we should be plunged, when we should be separated from him by lakes and rivers, plains and mountains. Nevertheless, in spite of this reciprocal wish to remain for ever together, it was decided that we should set off in two days. Various little intrigues immediately began ; all the Mandarins who were at liberty set about manœuvring to obtain the office of our escort, and their visits from that moment succeeded each other without interruption. It was a perfect avalanche of white and gilt balls which fell all at once into the halls of The Hidden Treasure. All these candidates were, if you could take their word for it, absolutely perfect men ; — they possessed in the highest degree the five cardinal virtues, and were also

perfectly familiar with all the laws of politeness; they all understood how much strangers of our importance must have need of care and attention, during the toilsome journey we were about to undertake. The countries we were about to traverse were well known to them, and we might rely on their experience and devotion. They showed this eagerness to accompany us, merely because a mission so glorious would render their names illustrious, and their lives permanently happy.

What all these fine things really meant was, that there was a little fortune to be gained by him who should have the chance of escorting us. According to the benevolent intentions of the viceroy, we were to travel like government officers of rank. In that case extraordinary contributions would be levied on all the countries through which we passed, to provide for our expenses and those of our escort; and the gentlemen who desired so greatly to be our conductors thought to profit by our inexperience in such matters, and retain for their own share the greater part of the funds that would be allotted for the purpose by the tribunals on our road. There exist very minute regulations concerning these sorts of journeys; but they thought we should know nothing about them. We took very good care, however, not to choose our conductors ourselves; we preferred leaving the appointment to the superior authorities, reserving in this manner the right of complaining if things did not afterwards turn out to our satisfaction. We should want, it appeared, two Mandarins; one of the literary class who would be the soul of the expedition, and one military, with fifteen soldiers, to secure the tranquillity and good order of our march.

On the evening before our departure, our friend the

Prefect of the Garden of Flowers paid us an official visit, to present the two successful candidates. The literary candidate, named Ting, was of the middle size, very thin, marked with the smallpox, and worn out with the use of opium; a great talker, and exceedingly ignorant. In our first interview he was careful to inform us that he was very much devoted to *Kao-wang*, a kind of divinity of the Chinese pantheon; and that he knew a great number of prayers, and especially some very long litanies, which he was in the habit of reciting every day. We are persuaded that it was with the intention of being particularly agreeable that they favoured us with this learned Mandarin and his long litanies; and he was, it must be confessed, something of a curiosity.

The military Mandarin, for his part, knew no prayers at all. He was a young man with a broad face, and a constitution naturally robust, but already suffering from the effects of opium. His manners were more polished and courteous than those of his colleague, and he even appeared to have made more progress in literary culture.

On the day of our departure we went at a very early hour to pay our farewell visit to the viceroy. This reception was not solemn and stately as on the former occasion; we had no music, and there was no assemblage of the civil and military officers of the town. We were accompanied only by the Prefect of the Garden of Flowers, who remained standing at the door of the cabinet in which we were received.

The same simplicity appeared in the deportment of the viceroy. He spoke to us with much kindness, and was good enough to enter into the most minute details on the subject of the orders he had given for our treat-

ment on the road; and in order that we might be fully aware of our claims, he presented us with a copy of the regulations that our conductors were bound to see executed.

During this visit the viceroy mentioned in confidence a circumstance that surprised us, and which tends to show that the Chinese are by no means as good mathematicians and astronomers as they are in Europe generally supposed to be. He told us that the government would soon find itself in great embarrassment on account of the necessity of a revision of the calendar, which was now no longer accurate. We knew very well that the first missionaries, at the epoch of their favour at court, had been complaisant enough to correct many grave errors that were found to exist in the Chinese computation of the lunar year, as well as to make for the government a kind of perpetual calendar for a considerable period. This period, however, was now nearly over, and the Office of Mathematics at Pekin had humbly declared itself incapable of preparing another.

The viceroy, who had probably received particular instructions on the subject from the Emperor, asked us whether there would be no means of engaging the missionaries to labour in the reform of the calendar? We replied that if the Emperor invited them to do so, they would probably have no motive for refusing his request. We took this opportunity, also, of reminding this high dignitary of the services formerly rendered to the Empire by the missionaries, in directing the works of the Mathematical Office, preparing maps of the provinces, and of tributary countries; negotiating various treaties with the Russians; and in a number of other occasions in which they showed as much talent as de-

votion to the Chinese government. "How many missionaries," said we, "have quitted their country to come and devote themselves entirely to the Chinese." And the Chinese, in what manner have they rewarded so many toils, and such great sacrifices? When they thought they no longer had need of the missionaries, they drove them ignominiously from their country; they put others to death; they seized on the establishments which they had erected at great expense; they even outraged, quite recently, the tombs of those learned and virtuous persons who excited the admiration of the celebrated Emperor Khang-hi.

When we spoke of the recent profanation of these tombs, the viceroy appeared struck with astonishment. The French missionaries formerly possessed, in the environs of Pekin, a magnificent piece of enclosed ground, that had been given to them as a burial place by the Emperor Khang-hi. There repose many of our countrymen, who died thus at the distance of ten thousand leagues from their country, after having worn out their lives in sufferings and privations in the midst of a people who never knew how to appreciate either their virtue or their knowledge.

We visited this enclosure, known among the Chinese as the French Burial Ground, several times, and could never do so without feeling our hearts beat as if we were about to set foot once more upon our native soil. This is, in fact, French soil; it is an affecting and precious colony, conquered in the midst of the Chinese Empire, by our departed brethren. The site of it is one of the finest to be found in Pekin. The walls are still in good preservation, but the house, and the wood-work, which is in a style half European

half Chinese, are greatly in need of repair. In the middle of a vast garden, now running wild, there is a grove in which the tombs of the missionaries have been placed by command, under some lofty forest trees; but as Europeans have now no longer a legal existence in China, the French Burial Ground was entrusted to the care of a Chinese Christian family, since sent into exile in consequence of a recent persecution. The establishment was then sacked and pillaged by the robbers of Pekin.

At present it is in possession of the government, and the heathens lodged in it steal every day whatever they like, — the trees, the materials of the chapel, even the stones from the tombs.

The viceroy, as we said, was struck with astonishment at hearing us speak of the pillage of the Burial Ground, and inquired whether the French government had been informed of it. "Possibly it may have been," we replied; "but if not, we will take care to give the information."

"And if I write to Pekin on the subject, and the Emperor should give orders to restore the sepulchres, will that satisfy the French?"

"They will doubtless be glad to learn that reparation has been made for the injury done to the tombs of their brothers."

The viceroy immediately called for a pencil, wrote some words, and promised, as soon as possible, to address to the Emperor a memorial relative to this affair. We afterwards talked with him a long time about European governments, the Christian religion, and the Imperial decrees obtained by M. de Lagrenée. The worthy old man evidently felt a good deal of anxiety concerning

the Mantchoo dynasty, and he appeared to understand that an epoch had arrived, in which, whether they would or not, the Chinese must modify their ancient institutions, and enter into relations with European powers. Thanks to steam, these are now no longer at so immense a distance from the Celestial Empire.

"I will go to Pekin," said he, "and I will myself speak to the Emperor."

At length the viceroy put an end to the interview, by addressing us with the customary words, "*I-lou-fou-sing*," "May the star of happiness accompany your journey." We wished him a long and happy old age, and left him to return to the house of the magistrate, where we were to meet the Mandarins of our escort.

We found a numerous company, composed of persons with whom we had become acquainted during our stay at Tching-tou-fou; we sat down to table and Pao-ngan served us up a regular feast according to "the Rites." Very soon the ceremonious formalities of the farewell began. They told us, in all sorts of tones, and with every conceivable variation, that during our residence with them they had annoyed us very much, and rendered our lives extremely unpleasant. On our sides we declared that on the contrary we had the greatest need of their indulgence and their pardon, for we had been most troublesome and exacting guests. Every one of course knew the value of this strange phraseology consecrated by custom, and which does sometimes happen

* In 1850, we went from Macao to Pekin, with the intention of seeing the viceroy, whom the Emperor had summoned to remain near his person. But, unfortunately, he died just a fortnight before our arrival.

Some short time afterwards the Emperor died also.

to be a very naïve expression of the truth. At last we entered our palanquins, and the procession, preceded by twelve soldiers armed with rattans, opened for us a passage through a dense throng of curious spectators. All were desirous of getting a glimpse of these famous "Western Devils," who had so strangely become the friends of the viceroy and the Emperor; and of this fact no one could doubt, since instead of strangling us, they allowed us to wear the yellow cap and the red girdle.

CHAP. IV.

DEPARTURE FROM TCHING-TOU-FOU. — LETTER THROWN INTO OUR PALANQUIN, AT THE GATE OF THE TOWN. — CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA. — ITS INTRODUCTION IN THE 5TH AND 6TH CENTURIES. — MONUMENT AND INSCRIPTION AT SI-NGAN-FOU. — PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE 14TH CENTURY. — ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE IN CHINA. — MACAO. — FATHER MATHEW RICCI. — DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST CHINESE MISSIONARIES. — PROSPERITY OF THE RELIGION UNDER THE EMPEROR KHANG-HI. — PERSECUTION UNDER THE EMPEROR YOUNG-TCHING. — ABANDONMENT OF THE MISSIONS. — NUMEROUS DEPARTURES OF THE NEW MISSIONARIES. — GLANCE AT THE PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA. — MOTIVES OF HOSTILITY IN THE GOVERNMENT TOWARDS CHRISTIANS. — INDIFFERENTISM OF THE CHINESE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION. — HONOURS PAID TO US ON OUR ROAD. — HALT AT A COMMUNAL PALACE. — TRICKERY ON THE PART OF MASTER TING. — NAVIGATION OF THE BLUE RIVER. — ARRIVAL AT KIEN-TCHEOU.

As we reached the southern gate of the town, we remarked among the mass of people assembled there a great number of Christians. They made the sign of the cross to enable us to recognise them, and also to afford us, as well as they could, an expression of sympathy. Their countenances showed satisfaction and confidence; for, they had doubtless imagined they saw in the attentions that had been lavished on us by the viceroy and the first magistrates of the town, the precursory signs of the religious liberty, the hope of which had shone for a moment on their path.

Perhaps, also, they might hope that information afforded *vivâ voce* to the representatives of France, concerning the nullity of the Imperial Edicts, would draw

forth a protest that might force back the Chinese government into the path of justice and moderation. If such were indeed their hopes on witnessing our departure for Macao, they must have been sadly disappointed; for their situation, instead of improving, became aggravated from day to day.

At the moment when we were passing through the last gate, one of us caught in his palanquin a letter, furtively flung in by a Christian who kept himself crouched in a corner; it was from M. Perocheau, Bishop of Maxula, and vicar apostolic of the province of Ssetchouen. This zealous and learned prelate spoke to us of numerous local persecutions, which were still desolating his vicariate, and begged us to remind the Mandarins we might meet with on the road, of the promises made by the Emperor with respect to the Christians of his Empire.

Our resolution was already taken in that matter, and the recommendation of the venerable elder of the Chinese Bishops could only confirm us the more in it. But unfortunately our efforts had a very small effect.

The Chinese Christian communities are still, as they were before, at the mercy of the Mandarins; and they have now, also, to dread the fanaticism and barbarity of the insurgents. All seems to indicate that the missionaries will long have to sow the divine seed in tears and sorrow. Truly lamentable is this obstinacy of the Chinese people, in rejecting, disdainfully, the treasure of faith, that Europe has never ceased to offer with so much zeal, devotion, and perseverance. No other nation has excited such lively solicitude on the part of the Church; no sacrifice has been spared for its sake; and yet it is the one, of all, that has proved most rebellious.

The soil has been prepared and turned in all directions with patience and intelligence; it has been watered by sweat and tears, and enriched with the blood of martyrs; the evangelical seed has been sown in it with profusion; the Christian world has poured forth prayers, to draw upon it the blessing of Heaven; and yet it is still as sterile as ever, and the time of the harvest is not yet come: for one cannot give the name of harvest to a few scattered ears, springing up here and there, and gathered in haste, lest they should fall at the first breath of the storm. It would not be impossible, perhaps, to point out the principal causes which hinder the propagation of the Gospel in China; but it will be better to give, first, a rapid sketch of the various attempts that have been made, at different epochs, to Christianise this vast Empire.

The first efforts to throw the light of faith on the central and eastern parts of Asia were made at a very remote period.

Already, as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, we discover traces of the first missionaries who travelled by land from Constantinople to what they called the Kingdom of Cathay; for it was under this name that China was first known in the West.

These apostles wandered on foot, their staves in their hands, over mountains, along banks of rivers, through forests and deserts, amidst privations and sufferings of every kind, to carry the tidings of salvation to nations unknown to the rest of the world. For a long time it was supposed that the Gospel was not preached in China till a comparatively recent period,—the time when the celebrated and courageous Mathew Ricci penetrated into the Empire in the latter half of the sixteenth

century. But the discovery of the monument and inscription at Si-ngan-fou*, the former capital of China, proves incontestably that in the year 635, the Christian religion was known and even flourishing there. This inscription speaks of numerous churches which owed their erection to the piety of the Emperors, and of magnificent titles bestowed on the priest, Olopen †, who is designated as the Sovereign Guardian of the Kingdom of the Great Law ; that is to say, Primate of the Christian religion.

In 712, the Bonzes excited a persecution against the Christians, who, however, after some transitory trials, were again triumphant. "Then," according to the inscription, "the religion that had been oppressed for some time, began again to raise its head. The stone of doctrine that had been for a moment thrown off its balance, recovered itself. In the year 744, there was a priest of the kingdom of Ta-thsin ‡ who came to China to salute the Emperor; he ordered this priest Sohan, and six others, with the one sent from Ta-thsin, to offer Christian sacrifices in the palace of Him-kim. Then the Emperor ordered them to suspend over the door of the church an inscription written with his own hand. This august tablet shone with a vivid splendour; and that is why all the earth conceived a great respect for religion. All affairs were perfectly well managed, and felicity, arising from religion, was profitable to the human race. Every year the Emperor Tai-tsoung, on the day of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, presented to the Church celestial per-

* A magnificent fac-simile of this celebrated inscription may be seen in the Imperial Library at Paris.

† There is every reason to believe that *Olopen* was a Syrian.

‡ The Roman Empire was thus designated by the Chinese of this epoch.

fumes; and he distributed Imperial viands to the Christian multitude, to render the day more remarkable and celebrated. The priest, Y-sou, a great benefactor of the religion, and, at the same time, a great person at court, lieutenant of the Viceroy of So-fan, and Inspector of the palace, to whom the Emperor has presented a religious habit of sky blue, is a man of gentle manners and mind, inclined to all sorts of good. As soon as he had received into his heart the true doctrine, he began to put it in practice. He came to China from a distant country, and he surpasses in industry all those who flourished under the three first dynasties; he understands perfectly the sciences and arts. In the beginning, when he laboured at court, he rendered excellent services to the state, and acquired, in a high degree, the esteem of the Emperor."

"This stone," concludes the inscription, "was prepared and raised in the second year of the reign of Tai-tsoung" (A. D. 781). "At that time the priest Niu-chou, Lord of the Law," (that is to say, Pontiff of the religion) "governed the whole body of Christians in the Oriental countries. Liou-siou-yen, counsellor of the palace, and formerly Member of the Council of War, wrote this inscription."

This precious monument, of which Voltaire had the audacity, or rather the bad faith, to dispute the authenticity, speaks also of a person celebrated in China named *Kouo-tze-y*. He was the most illustrious man of the Tang dynasty, either in peace or war; and several times replaced on the throne Emperors, who had been driven from it by foreigners and rebels. He lived to be eighty-four years of age, and died in 781, the same year when this monument was erected. His name has

remained popular in China to the present time: he is often chosen as the hero of dramatic pieces, and we have heard his name pronounced with respect in assemblies of Mandarins.

There is every reason to think that this man was a Christian; this is what is said of him on the monument of Si-ngan-fou.

"Kouo-tze-y, the first president of the ministerial court, and king of the city of Fen-yen, was in the beginning generalissimo of the armies of So-fan, that is to say in the Northern countries. The Emperor Soutsoung associated him with himself for his companion in a long march; but although, by singular favour, he was admitted familiarly even into the Emperor's chamber, he was never more in his own eyes than a simple soldier. He was the nails and the teeth of the Empire, the ears and the eyes of the army; he distributed among them the pay and the presents that he received from the Emperor, and never accumulated any thing in his own house. He kept the ancient churches in repair, or he enlarged them, raised their roofs and their porticoes to a greater height, and embellished them in such a manner that their edifices were like pheasants spreading their wings to fly.

"Besides that, he served in every manner the Christian religion; he was assiduous in the exercise of charity, and lavish in the distribution of alms. Every year he assembled the priests and the Christians of the four Churches; he entertained them zealously with suitable viands, and continued these liberalities for fifty days in succession. Those who were hungry came to him, and he fed them. He took care of the sick, and restored them to health; he buried the dead and put

them to rest. It has not been heard, up to the present time, that the virtue of any one shone so brightly, even in the Tha-so, those men who devote themselves so religiously to good works."

The whole life of Kouo-tze appears to have been admirable, and offers details of the greatest interest. We regret that the limits we are obliged to prescribe to ourselves, do not permit us to give here the biography of this illustrious Chinese Christian of the 8th century; but we cannot resist quoting the magnificent eulogium that a Chinese historian has passed upon him. "This great man," he says, "died in the eighty-fifth year of his age. He was protected by Heaven on account of his virtues; he was beloved by men on account of his beautiful qualities; he was feared by the enemies of the state on account of his valour; he was respected by the subjects within the Empire on account of his incorruptible integrity, his justice, and mildness; he was the support, the counsellor, the soul of his sovereigns; he was loaded with riches and honours, during the course of his long life; he was universally regretted at his death, and he left behind him a numerous posterity, the heirs of his glory and his merits, as well as of his fortune and his name. The whole Empire put on mourning at his death,—and this mourning was the same as that worn by children for the death of those from whom they have received life: it lasted three whole years."

There is no doubt, then, that the Christian religion was flourishing in China in the 8th century, since it contained within its bosom such men as Kouo-tze-y, but it is probable, nevertheless, that the faithful had many contests to sustain with the Bonzes, and also with the

Nestorians, who, at this epoch, were scattered in great numbers all over the regions of high Asia.

It is well known that towards the beginning of the 9th century, Timotheus, Patriarch of the Nestorians, sent some monks to preach the Gospel among the Tartars of Hioung-nou, who had taken refuge on the borders of the Caspian Sea, and subsequently these monks penetrated into Central Asia, and as far as China. The torch of faith grew pale afterwards, no doubt, even if it were not entirely extinguished, in those distant countries, but it revived in the most brilliant manner in the 13th and 14th centuries, the epoch in which the communications between the East and the West became more frequent on account of the crusades, and of the invasions of the Tartars,—gigantic events, whose effect was to unite and mingle together all the nations of the earth.

The Church did not fail to take advantage of these great political convulsions, to forward her pacific and holy work, the propagation of the faith. From the time of Tchingis-khan and his successors, missionaries were sent to Tartary and China. They carried with them ornaments of the church—altars and relics, "to see," says Joinville, "if they could attract these people to our faith." They celebrated the ceremonies of religion before the Tartar princes, who granted them an asylum in their tents, and permitted them to raise chapels, even within the enclosures of their palaces. Two of these, Plan-Carpin and Rubruk, have left us curious accounts of these travels.

Plan-Carpin was sent, in 1246, to the great Khan of the Tartars, by Pope Innocent the Fourth; he crossed the Tanais and the Volga, passed to the north of the Caspian Sea, followed the northern frontiers of the regions

that occupy the centre of Asia, and took his course towards the country of the Mongols, where a grandson of Tchingis-khan had just been proclaimed sovereign. About the same time, the monk Rubruk, charged by St. Louis with a mission to the Western Tartars, followed nearly the same route.

At Kharâ-Khoroum, the capital of the Mongols, he saw, not far from the palace of the sovereign, an edifice upon which was a little cross: "then," says he, "I was at the height of joy, and supposing that there must be some Christians there, I entered, and found an altar magnificently adorned. There were representations of the Saviour, the Holy Virgin, and of John the Baptist, on cloths embroidered with gold, and two angels, of which the body and the vestments were enriched with precious stones. There was a large silver cross, with pearls and other ornaments in the centre, and at the corners; and a lamp with eight jets of light burned before the altar. In the sanctuary was seated an Armenian monk of a swarthy complexion, very thin, wearing nothing but a coarse tunic, reaching only down to the middle of his leg, and a black mantle fastened with iron clasps."* Rubruk relates, that there were in

* *Tunc gavisus sum multum, supponens quod ibi esset aliquid Christianitatis. Ingressus confidenter, inveni altare paratum vere pulchre. Erat enim in panno aureo brosdate ymago Salvatoris et beate Virginis, et Johannis Baptiste et duorum angelorum, lineamentis corporis et vestimentorum distinctis margaritis, crux magna argentea habens gemmas in angulis et in medio sui, et alia philateria multa, et lucerna cum oleo ardens ante altare, habens octo lumina; et sedebat ibi unus monachus Armenus nigellus, macilentus, indutus tunica asperimma usque medias tibias, habens desuper pallium nigrum, de seta furratum, vario ligatus ferro sub cilicio.* — (Recueil de Voyages et de Mémoires publié par la Société de Géographie, tom. iv. p. 301.)

these countries a great number of Nestorians and Greek Catholics, who celebrated the Christian festivals with perfect freedom. Princes and Emperors even received baptism, and protected the propagators of the faith.

At the beginning of the 14th century, Pope Clement the Fifth* instituted an archbishopric at Pekin, in favour of Jean de Montcorvin, a French missionary, who preached the Gospel in these countries for forty-two years, and when he died left a very flourishing Christian community.

An archbishopric at Pekin, with four suffragans in the neighbouring countries: surely these afford sufficient proof that there were at this period a great number of Christians in China.

These communications, however, were interrupted, and by degrees Cathay and Zipangri †, whose wonders so much excited the imaginations of the Western nations, at the time when the curious narratives of the noble Venetian, Marco Polo, made their appearance, were entirely lost sight of by them.

The very existence of these empires began to be doubted; and the accounts of the famous traveller, whose faithfulness and simple sincerity are now fully admitted, were regarded as mere fables.

The discovery of China had to be made over again, and this glory belongs to the Portuguese. These bold navigators having reached the Cape of Good Hope, doubled it, and reached the Indies by a route that no vessel had followed before. In 1517, the Viceroy of

* The tomb of this celebrated Pope is to be seen in the cathedral of Avignon.

† China and Japan.

Goa despatched to Canton eight vessels under the command of Fernand d'Andrada, who received the title of Ambassador. D'Andrada, who was of a soft and pliant character, managed to gain the friendship of the Viceroy of Canton, and made an advantageous treaty of commerce with him, the commencement of the relations of China with Europe. Subsequently, the Portuguese rendered the Chinese a signal service by capturing a famous pirate, who had long ravaged their coasts; and in gratitude for this service the Emperor permitted the Portuguese to establish themselves on a peninsula formed by some sterile rocks. On this spot arose the city of Macao, long the sole mart of the commerce of Europeans with the Celestial Empire. At present Macao is a mere remembrance; the English establishment at Hong-Kong has given it the mortal blow, and nothing is left of its former prosperity but fine houses without tenants; in a few years more, perhaps, the European ships, as they sail past this once proud and wealthy Portuguese colony, will see only a naked rock to which the Chinese fisherman will come to dry his black nets. Missionaries, however, will still like to visit these ruins, for the name of Macao will be always celebrated in the history of the propagation of the faith; there, during many centuries, were formed, as in a cenacle, the apostles who afterwards went to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel to China, Japan, Tartary, the Corea, Cochin China, and Tonquin.

While the Portuguese were labouring to develope the importance of their colony of Macao, St. Francis de Xavier was preaching at Japan, which the Chinese merchants of Ning-po annually visited, in their great trading junks.

It was probably from them that he learned those particulars concerning China, which he wrote to Europe towards the end of his life. Having formed the project of carrying the faith into this vast empire, he embarked for it, but he had not yet set foot on the land he had so long sighed after, when he was overtaken by death on a little island near the Chinese coast.

Other Apostolic men, however, took up his idea, and heirs of his zeal for the glory of God threw themselves into the path he had pointed out. The first, and most celebrated, was Father Mathew Ricci, who entered China towards the end of the 16th century.

Religious ideas do not, it must be owned, strike very deep root in this country, and the seeds of the Christian faith, cast into it in the earlier ages, appear to have entirely perished. With the exception of the above-mentioned inscription at Si-ngan, no trace of the passage of former missionaries, or of their preaching, was then to be found. Not even in the traditions of the country was preserved the slightest trace of the religion of Jesus Christ. A melancholy trait is it in the character of this people, that Christian truth does but glide over its surface!

All was now to begin again; but Father Ricci possessed all the necessary qualifications for this great and difficult enterprise. "A zeal courageous and indefatigable, but wise, patient, circumspect,—slow, that it might be more efficacious, and timid in order to dare the more; such should have been the character of him whom God had destined to be the Apostle of a nation, refined, suspicious, and naturally hostile to all that does not arise within itself. A character so truly magnanimous was needed to begin over again a work so often destroyed,

to know how to profit by the smallest resources; his superior genius, and his rare and profound knowledge, were needed to render him respected by people accustomed to respect nothing but themselves, and to teach a new law to those who had not hitherto supposed that any one could teach them anything; and his modesty and humility were also required, to soften to this proud people, the yoke of a superiority of mind which is only voluntarily submitted to, when it is not perceived. Most of all was required the great virtue, and the continual union with God, that distinguished this apostolic man, to render supportable to himself, by the inward grace of the spirit, the toils of so painful a life as that which he led in China, compared with which one may consider that the longest martyrdom would have spared him many sufferings." *

After more than twenty years of labour and patience, Father Ricci had reaped only cruel persecutions and sterile applause; but after he had been received favourably at court, the conversions became numerous, and Catholic churches arose in many places. Father Ricci died in 1610, at the age of fifty-eight; and he had the consolation to leave his mission at last in a flourishing state, as well as missionaries animated with his own zeal, who like him, calling the arts and sciences to the aid of their ministry, continued to rouse the curiosity of the Chinese in order to dispose them favourably towards the object they had in view.

The most illustrious among them were the Fathers Adam Schal and Verbiest. It is to the latter that the French are indebted for their entrance into China; it was he who sent for them to Pekin and induced the Emperor to receive them and treat them with distinction.

* Preface to the *Lettres édifiantes*, t. iii. p. 5.

In 1684, an idea of sending missionaries to China began to be entertained in France for the first time. The Royal Academy of Sciences was then working, by order of the king, at the reform of their geography. They had sent members of their illustrious body into all the French ports of the ocean and the Mediterranean, as well as into England, Denmark, Africa, and America, to make the necessary observations. But they were much more perplexed when it came to sending persons to India and China. Academicians, it was thought, would run the risk of not being well received in those countries — and of giving offence. The Royal Academy began, therefore, to think of the Jesuits. Colbert had an interview on the subject with Father de Fontaney and M. Gassini. The death of the great Colbert frustrated the project for some time; but it was resumed afterwards, by his successor M. le Marquis de Louvois. Six missionaries — the Fathers de Fontaney, Tachard, Gerbillon, le Comte, de Visdelou, and Bouvet — embarked at Brest, on the 3rd of March, 1685, and landed at Ning-po on the 23rd of July, 1687. Thence they repaired to Pekin, where they had soon gained the esteem and admiration of all classes of the people by their virtue, their learning, and their apostolic zeal. They got so completely into the good graces of the Emperor, that he gave them a house even within the limits of the Yellow City, and quite near to his own palace, in order to be able to converse with them more easily. A short time afterwards he also assigned to them a large space for the construction of a church; he contributed with much liberality towards the expenses of the erection, and in order to afford the French missionaries a striking proof of his devotion, he chose himself to compose the Chinese inscription in

honour of the true God, that was to be placed on the front of it.

The Emperor Khang-hi declared himself openly as the protector of the new religion; influenced by his example, the princes and great dignitaries showed themselves favourable to it, and the number of neophytes increased considerably not only in the capital, but also throughout the extent of the Empire. The missionaries who were scattered about the provinces, profiting by the good disposition of the head of the State, redoubled their ardour in preaching of the Gospel, and in a short time there arose in every quarter, churches, chapels, oratories, and flourishing Christian communities. The Chinese no longer feared that by receiving baptism they should incur disgrace and the persecutions of the Mandarins. The Christians held up their heads and showed themselves proud of their religion; perhaps they did so a little too much, for it is common with men who are pusillanimous and cowardly in times of trial, to become arrogant in a period of prosperity. It was to be feared, however, that this success, based in some measure on the Imperial favour, would not be of very long duration: and thus it proved.

The unfortunate disputes of the missionaries on the subject of the rites practised in honour of Confucius and of ancestors, tended greatly to cool the friendship of the Emperor Khang-hi, and to excite his anger. At his death a violent reaction took place; his successor Young-tching let loose against the Christians the hatred and jealousy that had been held in check during the preceding reign. The celebrated Father Gaubil* ar-

* Father Gaubil, born at Gaillac (Tarn), was the most illustrious missionary of the period in China.

rived in China during this melancholy period, and he wrote thus concerning it (in 1722) to the Archbishop of Toulouse, Monsieur de Normond:—

"I have only been a few months in China, and I was much grieved when I came, to find a mission which only a short time ago held out such encouraging hopes, reduced to so melancholy a condition. The churches are in ruins, the Christians dispersed, the missionaries exiled and confined in Canton—the first port in China, without being permitted to advance further into the Empire; the religion itself is on the point of being proscribed. This, my lord, is the mournful sight that met my eyes at my entrance into a country supposed to be so favourably disposed for receiving the Gospel." The mournful predictions of Father Gaubil were not long in being realised. Two years afterwards Father de Mailla wrote to France, to one of his colleagues:—"How can we write to you in the overwhelming position in which we find ourselves, and how can we make known to you the particulars of the melancholy scenes that are passing before our eyes? What we have been dreading for so many years—what we had so often predicted—has at last come to pass. Our holy religion is entirely proscribed in China; all the missionaries, with the exception of those who were at Pekin*, have been driven from the Empire; the churches are demolished or put to profane uses; edicts have been issued, in which the severest penalties are threatened to those who shall embrace the Christian faith, or who having done so shall fail to renounce it. Such is the deplorable state to which a

* The missionaries permitted to remain at Pekin were employed in the Mathematical Office, under the title of artists and learned men.

mission is reduced, that for 200 years has cost us so much labour and suffering."

Thus the prosperity that had sprung up under the protection of one Emperor, disappeared at the first word of persecution from his successor. The Church of China had doubtless grand and beautiful examples of constancy in the faith to record in its annals; but numerous and lamentable defections proved also that Christianity had not struck deeper root in it than it had done in past ages, and that the Chinese, so tenacious and immoveable in their attachment to ancient custom, had little energy and steadiness in the cause of religion.

To Young-tching, a prince, as we have seen, hostile to Christianity, succeeded Kien-long, whose long and brilliant reign seemed to have revived that of Khangi. The missionaries recovered their credit at Court, and the work of the propagation of the Gospel was resumed, but amidst perpetual vicissitudes; sometimes tolerated, now and then openly protected, but more often fiercely persecuted, especially in the provinces. The number of Christians, however, was gradually increasing, when the suppression of the religious orders and the political commotions of Europe not only arrested the progress of the missions, but gave cause to fear that the flame of religion would be once more extinguished in the remote East. The old missionaries were removed by death, there were no new ones to take their places, and the Christians, left to themselves, were betraying the greatest weakness, when another persecution broke out under Kia-king, the successor of Kien-long on the Imperial Throne. During this unfortunate period the Christian communities, in many cases, completely disappeared.

We have visited, in the provinces, a great number of towns that formerly possessed Christian churches, where we could not find a single Christian. In the country some poor families still cling to the faith, as the Mandarins have found nothing among them to tempt their cupidity, or because, having no inheritance in this world, they the more felt the necessity of persevering in their efforts to gain one in the world to come.

In vain, however, has China disappointed over and over again the hopes of the Church, the Church is never discouraged. The moment circumstances appeared in the slightest degree more favourable, Evangelical labourers presented themselves, no less zealous and devoted than their predecessors. They crossed the ocean to seek, in that land ravaged by so many tempests, the few germs of faith that had not perished; they cherished them with care, they watered them with their tears, and scattered new seeds as they passed along in their apostolic journeys. Their first care was to collect the dispersed Christians, to induce them to resume the practice of their duty, and to bring back to God and to the faith the families that had had the weakness to succumb during the persecution. For thirty years past the number of missions has been continually on the increase, the greater part of the ancient communities have been re-organised, and the spark that had been nearly extinct revived again in their bosoms. Little by little also new ones have been formed to replace those that disappeared in the storm. The great and beautiful association for the propagation of the faith, with the idea of which God inspired a poor woman of Lyons, has made considerable progress; the Holy See has erected the eighteen provinces of China into so

many Vicariates Apostolic, in which priests of foreign missions, Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Lazaristes labour without ceasing for the extension of the kingdom of Heaven.

Every vicariate possesses, besides a great number of schools for the education of both boys and girls, and a seminary where young Chinese are brought up to the ecclesiastical profession; in various parts of the country also pious associations have been formed with the purpose of bestowing baptism on dying children, or collecting those who have been abandoned; and nurseries and asylums have been instituted on the model of those that have prospered so well in France.

At the present time the propagation of the Gospel is nevertheless not going on so well as before. The missionaries are no longer at court under the protection of the Emperor and of men of high rank, going and coming with the ceremonial of Mandarins, and appearing in the eyes of the people in the imposing position of a power recognised by the State. They are, on the contrary, proscribed throughout the length and breadth of the Empire; they have to creep into it by stealth, with all kinds of precautions, and to conceal their abodes to elude the vigilance of the magistrates. They even have to avoid showing themselves to the infidels for fear of exciting the suspicions of the authorities, and compromising the safety of the Christians and the future prospects of the missions. It may easily be supposed that, thus fettered, it is impossible for the missionary to act directly upon the population and afford his zeal free play. Not only is he prohibited from proclaiming in public the word of God, but it would not often be safe for him so much as to mention

the subject of religion in private with an infidel of whom he was not sure. He must circumscribe his zeal strictly within the limits of his ministry. To go from one community to another, to instruct and exhort the neophytes, administer the sacraments, celebrate in secret the festivals of the holy Church, visit the schools and afford what encouragement he can to both masters and pupils,—this is the circle within which he is compelled to confine himself. In all the communities there are certain heads or elders designated as *Catechists*, who are chosen among the most steady, best instructed, and influential Christians of the locality, and who are charged to instruct the ignorant, and to catechise and preside over the prayers in the absence of the missionary. It is they who can act most directly on the infidels, instruct them in the truths of religion, and exhort them to renounce the superstitions of Buddhism. But, unfortunately, their zeal for the conversion of their brethren is seldom very ardent, and they need to be constantly kept up to the mark by all kinds of encouragements.

Such is the method generally followed in China for the propagation of the faith, and it may easily be conceived that it leaves much to be desired. Here and there a few conversions take place, and, on the whole, the number of Christians does certainly increase,—but so slowly, and with so many hindrances, that one scarcely knows what to think of the future prospects of religion in these countries. On the whole, there may be perhaps at present 800,000 Christians in the Chinese Empire; but what is that out of 300,000,000 of inhabitants? Such an amount of success is not, it must be owned, very encouraging when it is remembered

that it is the result of many centuries of preaching, and of the efforts of countless missionaries.

It is natural that our readers should ask what may be considered the cause of this deplorable sterility. First, then, it is indisputable that, as the Government is opposed to Christianity, the timid and pusillanimous Chinese will have no great inclination to profess it, to brave the hostility of the Mandarins, and defying persecution, to exclaim with pious daring, "It is better to disobey man than God!" They will excuse themselves by referring to the prohibition of the Emperor. But it may be asked, "would it not be possible to induce the Emperor to grant religious liberty to his subjects?" No, we think not. Not that the Chinese Government is in its own nature intolerant and persecuting—not the least in the world; in matters of religion it is completely indifferent. It does indeed admit for the public functionaries a kind of official worship, consisting in merely external ceremonies, but it is itself profoundly sceptical, leaving the people to adopt what ideas they please concerning religion, and even from time to time recommending them to have none at all. The Emperor Tao-kouang, some time before his accession to the throne, addressed to the people a proclamation, in which he passed in review all the religions known in the Empire — Christianity included — and came at last to the conclusion that they were all false, and that one would do well to despise them altogether.

A Chinese may therefore please his fancy, and become a disciple of Buddha, of Confucius, of Lao-tze, or of Mahomet, without the tribunals troubling themselves at all about it; the Government only proscribes and

pursues with severity certain sects, which are in fact only secret societies, organised for the overthrow of the reigning dynasty. Unfortunately it has placed Christianity in this category, and it is very difficult to correct this error, and introduce more just ideas. Seeing that Christianity has been brought into China, and propagated by Europeans, the Government has persuaded itself that they have done this merely with a view to obtain partisans, in order to be able some time or other to seize on the Empire with more facility. The greater the zeal of the Europeans, the greater is the fear and suspicion of the Government. The submission and attachment, too, which the neophytes manifest towards these missionaries, tend to strengthen these chimerical terrors. We say chimerical, since assuredly we know very well that missionaries do not leave their country, and go to the end of the world to wear out their lives, in the hope of overthrowing a Mantchoo dynasty. But the Government of Pekin does not see this; being profoundly sceptical itself, it has no conception of religious feeling, and cannot at all comprehend why people should come so far, and endure so many sufferings and privations, for no other purpose than to teach gratuitously to unknown persons, forms of prayer, and the means of saving their souls. Such a proceeding would appear to them so excessively absurd, so great a folly and extravagance, that no one, not even a European, could be guilty of it. The Chinese, therefore, are thoroughly convinced that, under pretence of religion, we are really manœuvring for the invasion of the Empire, and the overthrow of the dynasty; and it must be owned, that they have under their eyes certain facts that have no tendency to

convince them of their mistake. Careful as they are to surround themselves with jealous barriers, and not to suffer an indiscreet glance to be cast on their own doings, they like very well to know what is going on among their neighbours. And what do they see all around them? Europeans, masters everywhere where they have introduced themselves, and the natives subjected to a domination little enough conformable to the precepts of the Gospel. The Spaniards in the Philippine Islands, the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, the Portuguese at their own doors, and the English everywhere! The French alone they do not see, but they are perhaps malicious enough to suppose that we are only seeking for an opportunity to instal ourselves somewhere.

This is no mere supposition of ours; the Chinese really have these notions, and they do not date from yesterday. In 1724, when the Emperor Young-tching proscribed the Christian religion, three of the principal Jesuits who were at Court addressed a petition to him, supplicating him to revoke his decision, and continue to the Christians the protection they had enjoyed under the previous reign. This is what is said on the subject in a letter of Father Mailla, dated from Pekin:—

"The Emperor sent for the three fathers to come to him,—a favour we by no means expected. As soon as they had been introduced to his presence he made them a speech a quarter of an hour long, which he seemed to have studied, for he repeated very fluently all that could justify his conduct with respect to us, and replied to the arguments alleged in the petition. This

is the substance of what he said:—'The late Emperor my father, after having instructed me for forty years, chose me in preference to my brothers to succeed him on the throne. It is my great endeavour to imitate him, and not to depart in anything from his manner of governing. Certain Europeans * in the province of Fo-kien have been endeavouring to defy our laws, and trouble our people. The great men of the province have applied to me, and I must repress this disorder. It is the business of the government with which I am charged, and I neither can nor ought to act now, as I did when I was a private prince.

"You say that your law is not a false law, and I believe it. If I thought it were, what should hinder me from destroying your churches and driving you from the Empire? False laws are those which under pretext of virtue fan the spirit of revolt,—as the law of Pe-lien-kiao† does. But what would you say if I were to send a troop of Bonzes and Lamas into your country to preach their law in it? How would you receive them?

"Le-ma-teou (the Chinese name for Father Ricci) came to China—in the first year of Ouan-ly. I will not speak of what the Chinese did at that time; that is not my business; but you were then in small numbers, a mere nothing. You had not your people and your churches in every province. It was only in my father's reign you began to build churches and to spread about your law everywhere with such rapidity; we observed it, though we did not dare say anything; but if you

* Spanish Dominicans, settled in the province of Fo-kien.

† The sect of the "White Lily."

found means to deceive my father, you need not hope to deceive me in the same way.

"You wish to make the Chinese Christians, and this is what your law demands, I know very well. But what in that case would become of us? The subjects of your kings! The Christians whom you make, recognise no authority but you; in times of trouble they would listen to no other voice. I know well enough that there is nothing to fear at present; but when your ships shall be coming by thousands and tens of thousands; then, indeed, we may have some disturbances."

From all that we have been able to observe during our long residence in China, it is certain that all Christians are regarded as the creatures of European governments. This idea has penetrated so deeply into the Chinese mind, that they sometimes express it with strange simplicity.

The Christian religion is designated in China as Tien-tchou-kiao, that is to say, the religion of the Lord of Heaven; the idea of God being expressed by the word Tien-tchou. One day we were speaking of religion with a really superior sort of Mandarin, a very intelligent fellow. He asked us who was that Tien-tchou, whom the Christians adore and invoke, and who had promised to render them rich and happy in such an extraordinary manner. "Why," said we, "do you, a learned man of the first class, a well-instructed man, and one who has read the books of our religion, do you ask this? Do you not know who is the Tien-tchou of the Christians?"

"Ah, you are right," said he, putting his hand to his forehead, as if to recall a half-vanishing recollection;

"you are right, I ought to know; but I really had forgotten all about this Tien-tchou."

"Well, you know now; who is he then?"

"Oh to be sure, everybody knows,—he is the Emperor of the French!"

All Mandarins perhaps are not so bad as this one, but the conviction is pretty general among them, that the propagation of Christianity is a political movement; and it would be extremely difficult to set them right, and induce the Government to grant the liberty which is so necessary for a favourable reception of the Gospel.

The frequent persecutions of all kinds, that the Government exerts against the Christians, form of course one great and serious obstacle to the conversion of the Chinese; but it is not the greatest, for after all there was a time when religion was not exposed to these attacks from the authorities. Under the reign of the Emperor Khang-hi, the missionaries were honoured and caressed by the Court; the Emperor himself wrote in favour of Christianity; he had churches built at his expense, and the preachers, provided with an Imperial licence, might traverse the Empire freely from one end to the other, and exhort every one to be baptized. No Christian had anything to fear; on the contrary, they were sure to find, in case of need, aid and protection from the missionaries. No one dared to do them the least injury or the slightest wrong; the Mandarins were obliged to treat them with kindness and consideration; but notwithstanding these advantages, so greatly appreciated by the Chinese, the conversions were by no means as rapid, numerous, and steadily progressive, as they were in Europe when the Gospel was first preached there. With some few precious

exceptions, it was met everywhere with coldness and indifference.

It is not necessary, however, to go back so far, in order to know what the Chinese character is, even when there is nothing to be feared from the Mandarins. In the five ports open to Europeans, religious liberty really does exist, and it is protected by the presence of consuls and ships of war. Yet the number of Christians does not increase more rapidly than in the interior of the Empire. In Macao, Hong Kong, Manilla, Sincapore, Pinang, Batavia, though they are under the dominion of Europeans, the great mass of the population consists of Chinese, who for the most part are permanently settled in these cities, and hold in their hands the great interests of agriculture, commerce, and industry. It is certainly not the fear of persecution from the European authorities that hinders them from embracing Christianity. Yet the conversions are not more numerous than elsewhere.

At Manilla, which is a Spanish colony, the number of Chinese Christians is considerable; but that may probably be ascribed to the effect of a law passed by the Spanish Government, which forbids a Chinese to marry a *Tagale** woman, until he has become a Christian. When the Chinese wish to marry, therefore, they receive baptism, just as they would go through any other ceremony that was required. But if, even after the lapse of many years, the fancy takes them to return to their own country, they leave the wife and the religion behind, and go back as they came, perfect sceptics, and not troubling themselves at all about things spiritual and eternal. It is this radical, profound indifference to

* The Tagales are the aborigines of the Philippine Islands.

all religion — an indifference that is scarcely conceivable by any who have not witnessed it — which is in our opinion the real, grand obstacle that has so long opposed the progress of Christianity in China. The Chinese is so completely absorbed in temporal interests, in the things that fall under his senses, that his whole life is only materialism put in action.

Lucre is the sole object on which his eyes are constantly fixed. A burning thirst to realise some profit, great or small, absorbs all his faculties — the whole energy of his being. He never pursues any thing with ardour but riches and material enjoyments. God — the soul — a future life — he believes in none of them, or, rather, he never thinks about them at all. If he ever takes up a moral or religious book, it is only by way of amusement — to pass the time away. It is a less serious occupation than smoking a pipe, or drinking a cup of tea. If you speak to him of the foundations of faith, of the principles of Christianity, of the importance of salvation, the certainty of a life beyond the grave — all these truths, which so powerfully impress a mind susceptible of religious feeling, he listens to with pleasure, for it amuses him and piques his curiosity. He admits every thing, approves of all you say, does not find the least difficulty, or make the smallest objection. In his opinion, all this is "true, fine, grand," and he puts himself into an oratorical attitude, and makes a beautiful speech against idolatry, and in favour of Christianity. He deplores the blindness of men, who attach themselves to the perishable goods of this world; perhaps he will even give utterance to some fine sentences on the happiness of knowing the true God; of serving him, and of meriting by this means the

reward of eternal life. To listen to him, you would think him just ready to become a Christian, in fact, that he was such already; yet he has not advanced a single step. It must not, however, be supposed that his speeches are wholly insincere; he does really — after a fashion — believe what he says; at all events, he has certainly no conviction to the contrary; he merely never thinks of religion as a serious matter at all. He likes very well to talk about it; but it is as of a thing not made for him — that he personally has nothing to do with. The Chinese carry this indifference so far, — religious sensibility is so entirely withered or dead within them, — that they care not a straw whether a doctrine be true or false, good or bad. Religion is to them simply a fashion, which those may follow who have a taste for it.

In one of the principal towns of China, we were for some time in communication with a lettered Chinese, who appeared extremely well disposed to embrace Christianity. We had several conferences together, and we studied carefully the most important and difficult points of doctrine, and finally, by way of complement to our oral instruction, we read some of the best books. Our dear catechumen admitted, without any exception, every thing we advanced; the only difficulty was, he said, the learning by heart the prayers, that every good Christian ought to know, in order to say them morning and evening. As he seemed nevertheless to desire putting off to some indefinite period the moment in which he should declare himself a Christian, every time he came to see us we urged him to do so, and made the most earnest representation of the duty of following the truth, now that he knew where it lay. "By and by," said he; "all in good time. One should

never be precipitate." One day, however, he spoke out a little more. "Comé," said he, "let us speak to-day only words conformable to reason. It is not good to be too enthusiastic. No doubt the Christian religion is beautiful and sublime; its doctrine explains, with method and clearness, all that it is necessary for man to know. Whoever has any sense must see that, and will adopt it in his heart in all sincerity; but, after all, one must not think too much of these things, and increase the cares of life. Now, just consider—we have a body; how many cares it demands! It must be clothed, fed, and sheltered from the injuries of the weather; its infirmities are great, and its maladies numerous. It is agreed on all hands, that health is our most precious good. This body that we see, that we touch, must be taken care of every day, and every moment of the day. Now is not this enough, without troubling ourselves about a soul that we never do see? The life of man is short and full of misery; it is made up of a succession of important concerns, that follow one another without interruption. Our hearts and our minds are scarcely sufficient for the solicitudes of the present life—is it wise then to torment one's self about the future one?"

"Doctor," we replied, "you said when you began, that our discourse to-day should be a reasonable one; but take care, for it often happens, that we think we are listening to the voice of reason, when in fact only prejudice and habit are speaking. Our bodies are full of infirmities, you say; that is true, for they are perishable, and it is for that very reason we should do better to concern ourselves about our souls, which are immortal, and which certainly exist, though we cannot see them. Our present life, you say, is a tissue of paltry cares.

Undoubtedly it is — and that is precisely why it is reasonable to think of that future life which will have no end. What would you think of a traveller who, on finding himself at a dilapitated inn, open to all the winds and deficient in the most absolute necessaries, should spend all his time, in trying how he could make himself most comfortable in it, without ever thinking of preparing for his departure, and his return into the bosom of his family? Would this traveller be acting in a wise and reasonable manner?"

"No! no!" replied the doctor; "one must not travel in that way; but man, nevertheless, ought to confine himself within proper limits. How can he provide for two lives at the same time? If the traveller ought not regularly to take up his abode at an inn, neither ought he to travel on two roads at the same time. When one wishes to cross a river, one must not have two boats, and set a foot in each; one would run the risk of tumbling into the water, and drowning oneself." This was all we could get out of the doctor, who nevertheless was really a worthy fellow enough, but a most thorough *Chinese*. We shall, in the sequel, often have occasion to refer to this indifferentism, the inveterate and chronic malady of the Empire of China.

The reader may perhaps, by this time, have forgotten that we were setting out from the Tching-tou-fou, and that we received at the gate, a letter from Monseigneur the Vicar Apostolic of the province of Sse-tchouen. It was this letter that occasioned us to cast a glance over the first introduction the numerous vicissitudes and the present state of Christianity in China.

During the first hour of our march, we noticed all

along the road the hurry and activity that is always seen more or less in the neighbourhood of great towns, but more especially in China, where traffic keeps every one perpetually in motion. Horsemen, pedestrians, porters, thronged the road, and raised clouds of dust, that soon completely enveloped us and our palanquins, and threatened to suffocate us. By degrees, as we advanced, all these busy travellers had to slacken their pace, and get out of the way, and, in fact, to stop, in order to allow us to pass. The horsemen alighted, and those who wore large straw hats had to take them off. Those who did not hasten to show these marks of respect to the illustrious "Devils of the West," were graciously invited to do so, by a shower of thumps with the rattan, bestowed by way of reminder by two of our attendants, who acquitted themselves *con amore* of so pleasant a duty. When people spared them the trouble by being voluntarily mindful of "the rites," they walked off, looking rather sulky, and eyeing with a disappointed look their idle bamboos.

It is usual in China for the people to manifest their respect for magistrates, when they pass them in the streets, or on the roads, with their insignia of office. No one is allowed to remain seated; those who are in palanquins have to stop, the horsemen to alight, the wearers of broad-brimmed straw hats to uncover, every body has to keep silence and to maintain a respectful and filial attitude in presence of him whom they call their "Father and Mother;" and who passes proudly before them, casting at them from his palanquin an oblique and disdainful glance. Those who, from negligence or forgetfulness, fail to comply with this ceremonial, are immediately and roughly recalled to their

duty, by some ill-looking, uncombed satellites, with sallow faces and fierce eyes, who are down upon them in a moment with their whips and rattans, and endeavour in the most energetic manner to inculcate on them a lesson of filial piety. In general, the people submit with a very good grace to these demands, to which they are bent and fashioned by long habit, and the legitimacy of which no one dreams of contesting. But it does nevertheless happen from time to time, that the Chinese do not take these lessons with quite so much docility, and then quarrels and even regular battles take place, in which everybody takes part, the merely curious and disinterested parties generally with the citizens against the agents of authority. The satellites then become humbled and trembling; they are pushed about, hustled, beaten and pulled by their tails, and the Mandarin generally has at last to get out of his palanquin to quell the riot. If he is loved and esteemed by the people, this is easy enough; they listen to his exhortations, and the seditious revolt dies away; but if it happens that they have any complaints against him, they profit by this fortunate occurrence to give him a lesson in his turn. They crowd round him, and load him with sarcasm and abuse, the illusion of his omnipotence speedily vanishes; and the people, usually so respectful and submissive, are carried by passion to the most violent excesses.

The viceroy Pao-hing, in framing the regulations to be observed during our journey, had ordered that all along the road the same honours should be paid to us as to functionaries of the highest rank; and we had scarcely begun our journey, before we perceived that very energetic measures were employed in the execution

of the prescribed orders. It was far from agreeable to us to travel in this way. We fairly blushed with shame at assuming thus the appearance of petty tyrants, and felt a pang of remorse, whenever our attendants gave way to their brutality against travellers who were not quite quick enough in demonstrating their respect. Yet notwithstanding our repugnance, it was necessary to reconcile ourselves to these rather savage honours, which the Celestial Empire has but seldom lavished on foreigners. All that we could do was to beg the civil Mandarin to desire our people to be as indulgent as possible to those who might fail in the observance of the "Rites." He did so; but our recommendation had very little effect; indeed it rather seemed to operate the contrary way, for our satellites, seeing that we had taken notice of their zeal in our honour, became even more zealous than before.

After a three hours' march we reached a Koung-kouan, or communal palace, where we were to rest for a little while and take some refreshments. The guardians of the palace were waiting for us in their state dresses at the door, the top of which had been hung with draperies of red silk; and at the moment of our entrance, they set fire to a paquet of fireworks that had been fastened to the end of a long bamboo; and we marched into the hall of reception to the sound of this Chinese musquetry, and in the midst of the profoundest salutations, which we endeavoured to return with interest. Upon a brilliantly varnished table was placed a magnificent collation of pastry and fruit, amidst which rose conspicuously an enormous water melon, the thick black skin of which had been carved in fanciful designs by a Chinese engraver. By the side of

the table was a *guéridon*, supporting an antique porcelain jar full of lemonade.

Before we sat down to table, one of the guardians of the palace brought us a large copper tub filled with boiling water, into which he plunged some small napkins, and then, wringing them out, he presented one to each of us. Linen towels are made use of in this way, hot and smoking, to wipe the hands and face; and the custom of offering them to you after meals and on journeys is universal in China.

At the beginning of our residence in the country we had some difficulty in conforming to this practice. When we went to visit our Christian converts, and immediately on our arrival, they always hastened to present us with a piece of wet linen, whence issued a boiling vapour; and we should have been very glad to dispense with the ceremony. But by degrees we got accustomed to it, and at last really liked it.

The heat and the dust had annoyed us so much, that we did not fail to do honour to the Chinese fruits, and especially to the lemonade, which was deliciously cool. We were rather surprised to find that it had been prepared with ice, for this is by no means customary amongst the Chinese, who, when they are parched with thirst, can think of nothing more refreshing than swallowing a cup of boiling tea. As we expressed our astonishment at being served with a beverage so conformable to our tastes and the customs of our country, the guardians of the palace informed us that the viceroy had sent all along the road, to the places where we were to stop, a set of orders, which prescribed, even to the minutest details, the manner in which we were to be entertained. We asked to see these orders, and

there truly we read, that the viceroy commanded all the guardians of communal palaces to provide us with juicy fruits, melons, and iced water, flavoured with lemon and sugar, because "such are the customs of the people who come from the western seas." It would certainly not have been easy to find any one more polite and gracious than this Viceroy of Sse-tchouen. When he was questioning us concerning our habits of life in our own country, we did not imagine it was with the view of rendering our passage through China more agreeable to us. In general, we have met with much more devotion of character amongst the Mantchoos than the Chinese, — always more generosity, and less treachery; and now when the Mantchoo Tartars are about to be driven from China,—when they are attacked so violently in all the writings that speak of the Chinese insurrection, we can do no less than bear this sincere and just testimony to their merits.

We resumed our march after a short halt, and arrived a little before night at Kien-tcheou, a town of the second order. In this our first day's journey, we already had occasion to be angry with our conductor, the Mandarin Ting; and we took good care not to let him escape. We had remarked as we came along that our palanquins were not the same that had been shown to us before our departure, which were perfectly convenient. Master Ting had indeed received the money to purchase these, but he had not been able to resist the temptation of keeping the half of it for himself, and had accordingly got two old, narrow, broken-down palanquins varnished, and made to look like new. These were so narrow and inconvenient, that we had had an extremely uneasy journey. But it was not enough

for Master Ting thus to speculate on our palanquins; he wished to turn an honest penny also on our bearers. It had been arranged that we were to have four a-piece; but this ingenious speculator had managed to make us do with three; two before, and one behind, so that he pocketed the wages of the fourth.

We were not surprised at this, for we knew that a Chinese can scarcely ever keep the straight path of himself, but has to be forcibly brought back to it. We did not, however, expect to have to begin the very first day, and it did not seem a good augury.

In the evening, when we were taking tea together, we told our conductor that we had been arranging our plans for the next day. "Oh, I understand," said he, with the satisfied air of a man who considers himself very sagacious; "you don't like the heat, and you would rather set off at an earlier hour in order to enjoy the freshness of the morning; that's it, is it not?"

"Not at all! you are to set out alone, and to go back to Tching-tou-fou."

"Have you, perhaps, forgotten something?"

"No! we have forgotten nothing; but you will go back, as we said, to Tching-tou-fou; you will go to the Viceroy, and tell him that we will have nothing more to do with you."

We said this in so serious a manner, that Master Ting could not possibly imagine there was any joke meant. He started up, and stared at us open-mouthed with an expression of astonishment; and we went on.

"We will have nothing more to do with you; and you will beg the Viceroy to send us another conductor. If the Viceroy should ask why we will have nothing more to do with you, you can tell him, if you please,

that it is because you have been cheating us in making us travel in two bad palanquins, and giving us only three bearers each, instead of four.

"That is true! that is true!" cried Master Ting, whose animal spirits had now got into circulation again; "I noticed as we went along that your palanquins were not at all fit for persons of your quality: what you want are those fine, handsome palanquins with four bearers; who could doubt that? I saw this morning that there was some confusion in Pao-ngan's house; and things have not been managed as they ought to have been. The Hidden Treasure is a man who loves lucre, as everybody knows; but who could suppose he would carry his avarice so far, as not to provide you with suitable palanquins? One must have little regard for one's honour and reputation, to do such a thing as that. However, *we* are rather different sort of people; we will endeavour to make amends for the evil doings of Hidden Treasure, and give you good palanquins, instead of those bad ones." This speech was completely Chinese, — that is to say, a lie from one end to the other; but it would have been taking trouble to little purpose to endeavour to refute it. "My Lord Ting," said we, "we know very well what to think on the subject of this fraud; but it does not so much matter to us to know who has pocketed the money for our palanquins, as to know whether we shall have any others. That is the question."

"Yes, certainly, you shall. How can personages like you travel in this manner?"

"When shall we have them?"

"Directly — to-morrow."

"Mind what you say. Do not promise more than you can perform."

"To-morrow; certainly not later. We shall come to a considerable place, where the traveller can find every thing he desires."

"Since that is the case, let us set off together."

At dawn on the following morning, it was announced to us that every thing was ready for our departure. We entered our narrow travelling prisons, and, after a very circuitous course through the streets of the town, the procession reached a great-gate, on the banks of the famous Yang-tze-kiang (the "river which is the Son of the Sea"), and which the Europeans call the Blue River. Master Ting approached us now, and said, in the most gracious manner in the world, that since the way by land was long, mountainous, toilsome, and dangerous, from passing by many precipices, he had taken the liberty to hire a boat, in order to render that part of our journey more agreeable and rapid. We had been journeying so long on *terra firma*, that a little trip by water promised to be uncommonly pleasant. The pure calm sky foretold apparently a delightful day, and we already enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure of feeling ourselves borne along by the majestic current of the finest river in the world; whilst we contemplated at leisure the splendour and magnificence of its shores. We immediately, therefore, ascended the deck of the junk, and our palanquins were brought on board after us.

Those who have not a tolerably good stock of patience, or who do not desire an opportunity of acquiring it, should certainly not think of travelling to the Celestial Empire, to enjoy the pleasure of a voyage in a junk.

They might run the risk of going mad before they weighed anchor.

Scarcely had our procession reached the place of embarkation, than every body hastened to get on board, and to instal himself there according to his own peculiar notions of comfort.

It has always seemed to us, that the nature of a Chinese, body and soul, had an astonishing resemblance to that of India-rubber. The suppleness of their minds can only be compared to the elasticity of their corporeal frames; and it is worth seeing how, when they have found a snug corner, be it ever so small, they will manage to stuff themselves in, and curl themselves round, and make a perfect nest of it; and when they have once taken up such a position, they are settled in it for the day.

We were no sooner on board, than our numerous travelling companions all contrived to get themselves housed. The palanquin bearers seemed to us to have taken up a position one upon the other in the kitchen, to which air and daylight could only enter by a very small aperture. But these people really appear to regard air and light as mere superfluities. No sooner, too, had they crouched down in this hole, than they set to work eagerly to play at cards.

The soldiers, our servants, and those of the Mandarins had, in the meanwhile, stowed themselves away between decks in all sorts of impossible and unimaginable postures, and were busy regaling themselves with tea, tobacco, and noisy gossip. Our two conductors, Ting and the military officer Leang, had taken refuge in an alcove closed in with curtains, through the numerous slits of which we could distinguish the feeble

rays of a lamp and much white vapour, which exhaled a fœtid odour, giving us plainly to understand that the chiefs of our escort were engaged in intoxicating themselves with opium. As for ourselves, alone and tranquil on the deck of the junk, we were pacing backwards and forwards, drawing the fresh morning air into our lungs, and watching the bustle of the port, and the smiling faces of a crowd of the townspeople, for whom we appeared to present the most astonishing spectacle they had ever seen. As for the crew of the vessel, not a man was there to be seen, with the exception of an old fellow, rolled up like a pin-cushion, near the helm, but who did not appear to concern himself at all about things below, and most likely still less about those above. He was hugging his knees, on which his chin rested; and since we had come on board, he had not quitted, for a single moment, this comfortable and elegant attitude.

We asked him whether we were not soon going to set off. Then he rose up, and answered, looking all the while at the sky, "Who knows that? I am not the master — I am only the cook."

"Where is the master, then? Where are the sailors?"

"The master is at home, and the sailors are at the market."

On this information we resumed our walk, and the cook his favourite attitude. A European, who was still a novice in the Celestial Empire, might perhaps have become impatient, and made, as the phrase is, bad blood, on such an occasion.

After the lapse of two long hours, the sailors seem to have remembered that they had a junk in port, and, slowly and quietly, one after another made his appear-

ance. The master at length called over their names, and the crew being found complete, the plank between the deck and the shore was taken away. That was something; but we were still a long way off starting. Our two mandarins now came out of their opium den, and went to find the master; and then began a dispute that seemed interminable, for no arrangement had yet been made about the price for our passage. By the time all these difficulties were smoothed, it was nearly noon; the sailors began their nasal song, as they worked at the capstan and unfurled the large matting sails; the great iron-wood anchor was soon up, and the breeze and the current bore us swiftly away, while a Chinese sailor kept up a sonorous tune, striking the *tam-tam* by way of salute to the shore.

We had promised ourselves an agreeable — indeed a magnificent—day. The morning, as we said, left nothing to desire, but the fine weather did not last. The sky soon became covered with clouds, and we had hardly been sailing a quarter of an hour before a pouring rain forced us to quit the deck and take refuge below, in the midst of a deafening noise and an air close to suffocation.

As we had but a short time before quitted the frozen mountains of Thibet, we suffered much in this species of stew-pan, where we seemed to breathe only the burning and nauseous vapours of tobacco and opium. After having been so often in danger of perishing from cold, we were now apparently likely to die of heat.

Whilst we were thus being *cured* in a corner of this great smoking room, our Chinese appeared perfectly at their ease. They panted a little from time to time; but we saw that on the whole they were happy, and that this state of things was perfectly agreeable to them. Master

Ting especially seemed to be in a state of the highest self-satisfaction. After having smoked abundantly both tobacco and opium, and swallowed a considerable number of cups of tea, he began to warble his long litanies, doubtless to thank his patron, Kao-wang, for having thus far prospered his honest endeavours. We understood perfectly well, however, that the cause of his extreme satisfaction was the handsome profit he expected to make out of the journey; this being the case, his delightful humour was quite intelligible.

A young Chinese, named Wei-chan, who had been given to us for a private servant, and who appeared very much devoted to us, probably because he thought it his interest to do so, kept us a little *au courant* to the diplomatic manœuvres of our conductors.

This trip on the water we found had only been undertaken in consequence of a little prudent calculation. At every stage, the Mandarin of the place where we stopped was obliged to supply all the wants of the party, as well as the expenses of the road to the next stage; and to furnish bearers for the palanquins, and horses for the soldiers. These *corvées* cost considerable sums. Now Master Ting had made his little arrangements thus; he sent forward his scribe along the route we were to have followed, to gather the appointed tribute, but graciously to inform the Mandarins that he would spare them all the trouble of the affair by proceeding by water. It was easy, as we were going down the river, to do in one day the distance of four stages, and as the hiring of a boat costs very little, the profits became enormous.

This is why Master Ting was reciting the litanies of Kao-wang with such a beaming countenance.

If our voyage had been but tolerably agreeable, we should have been happy to give him the opportunity of realising this little fortune; but it was abominable, and more than once perilous. The rain never left off for a single moment; and as we had set off so late, night came on before we had gone half the way. The navigation of the Blue River, so safe and easy in the interior of China, when it has acquired its full development, and rolls its majestic volume of waters through vast plains, presents serious difficulties in the mountainous province of Sse-tchouen. Its course has sometimes the rapidity of a perfect torrent; and its bed is winding, and full of shoals which demand great skill and prudence in the navigation. This is why the viceroy had ordered that we should make the journey by land; but he had reckoned without his Master Ting, who could not resist speculating on our lives and his own. We did not utter a word of complaint or reproach; but we contented ourselves with forming, on our side, our little plan for the next day, which would, we flattered ourselves, check any inclination he might feel in future to follow the suggestions of his enterprising genius.

It was past midnight when we arrived at *Kien-tcheou*, a town of the third order. The night was profoundly dark, and the rain still falling heavily; the anchor was dropped as near as possible to the shore, where we could perceive a great deal of bustle, and many lanterns moving about in all directions; these were the persons sent from the various tribunals, and Ting's scribe, who were waiting for us.

The disembarkation was effected amidst tremendous vociferation and indescribable confusion. As soon as our palanquins had been put ashore, we entered them;

and our bearers, feeling doubtless, after their thirty hours' rest, the want of a little exercise to put their blood into circulation, set off with us at a round pace. At the moment when they started, Master Ting bawled to them, at top of his voice, to be sure and take us to the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes.

At the corner of the street, however, we stopped the bearers, and desired them to proceed to the communal palace, for we intended to lodge there, and at no hotel; and they immediately obeyed, while our escort probably directed their steps to the above-named Hotel of Accomplished Wishes. We soon arrived; but there was no appearance of our having been expected, for all the gates of the palace were shut. We told the bearers to make a noise; and it must be proclaimed to their honour, that they acquitted themselves of this duty in a manner there could be no mistake about, and fairly stunned us. A heap of great stones lay just handy, and in a moment they were sent flying against the door, which was soon opened, and a guardian of the palace made his appearance, in a very incomplete costume indeed, and not having, evidently, the most distant notion what the riot was about. When he had a little recovered from his consternation, we were able to enter into some explanations, from which it appeared, as we expected, that the guardians of the Koung-houan had not been informed of our arrival, and that there was nothing in readiness for our reception. This was, then, another manœuvre, *à la Chinoise*, of Master Ting, and we had nothing for it, but to betake ourselves to the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes, the name of which, as far as we were concerned, certainly had rather a satirical sound. We found there all the escort assembled, and Master Ting,

and the officer *Leang*, hastened to assure us, that if no one had been drowned on the way, it was entirely owing to our merit; that every one had been sheltered under our good fortune, and so forth; and then they tried to explain to us how it was quite impossible that we should have been lodged at the communal palace. "Well," said we, "we are tired and hungry; let us have something to eat, and then go to bed, for it is long past midnight; we can settle other affairs to-morrow."

CHAP. V.

DISPUTES WITH THE MANDARINS OF KIEN-TCHEOU. — INTRIGUES TO PREVENT US FROM GOING TO THE COMMUNAL PALACE. — MAGNIFICENCE OF THIS PALACE. — THE GARDEN OF SSE-MA-KOUANG. — CHINESE KITCHEN. — STATE OF THE ROADS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION. — SOME PRODUCTIONS OF THE PROVINCE OF SSE-TCHOUEN. — USE OF TOBACCO, IN SMOKING AND TAKING SNUFF. — TCHOUNG-TCHING, A TOWN OF THE FIRST ORDER. — CEREMONIES OBSERVED BY THE CHINESE IN VISITS AND CONVERSATIONS OF ETIQUETTE. — NOCTURNAL APPARITION. — WATCHMEN AND CRIERS OF THE TOWN. — FIRES IN CHINA. — THE ADDITION OF A MILITARY MANDARIN TO OUR ESCORT. — TCHANG-CHEOU-HIEN, A TOWN OF THE THIRD ORDER. — RELEASE OF THREE CHRISTIAN PRISONERS. — SUPERSTITIOUS PRACTICES TO OBTAIN RAIN. — THE DRAGON OF RAIN EXILED BY THE EMPEROR.

DAY had scarcely dawned, when Master Ting took it upon him to interrupt our first sleep, to announce to us that it was time to set off.

"Take yourself off, Master Ting," said we, "as quickly as you can; and, moreover, if any one else has the impudence to come disturbing us, we will get you degraded."

The door closed, and we turned round and went to sleep again, for we were worn out with fatigue. At noon we rose, quite refreshed and ready to begin the war with the Mandarins.

We turned our steps towards a neighbouring apartment, from which proceeded a whispering sound, as of a conversation carried on in a low voice. We opened the

door, and found ourselves in the presence of a numerous and brilliant assembly, composed of the principal magistrates of the town. After saluting the company with the utmost solemnity, we perceived in the middle of the room a table, on which were arranged some little dishes for a dessert, the prelude *obligato* of every Chinese repast. Without any other explanation, we drew forward an arm-chair, and begged the company to be good enough to be seated. Our assurance seemed to create some astonishment; but a great fat Mandarin, the prefect of the town, pointed out the places of honour, and invited us to take them, which we immediately did without hesitation. This was not very modest on our part, nor quite conformable to the Chinese rites; but we needed, for the moment, to make an imposing impression.

The guests were numerous. The dessert was attacked in silence, every one contenting himself with exchanging a few forms of politeness in a low voice. They glanced at us by stealth, as if to make out from our countenances the nature of our sentiments. There was evidently a feeling of general embarrassment. At length a young civil functionary, probably the boldest of the troop, ventured to reconnoitre the ground.

"Yesterday," said he, "was a disagreeable day; the navigation of the Blue River must have been far from pleasant; but to-day the weather is splendid. It is a pity that you did not set out at an early hour in the morning; you would have arrived at *Tchoung-tching* before nightfall. Tchoung-tching is the best town in the province."

"Certainly," repeated the others in chorus; "there is nothing comparable to Tchoung-tching. One finds there every thing one can wish for. What a difference

between this country and that! Here poverty is excessive—we live only in privation."

"It is not yet very late," resumed the young functionary; "you can get as far this evening as the communal palace on the road, pass the night there, and arrive to-morrow at Tchoung-tching before noon."

"Oh!" added another, "the thing is easy enough; for the roads are as flat as my hand, and the country is enchantingly beautiful; you travel constantly under the shade of large trees."

"Have the bearers of the palanquins been told?" cried the fat prefect of the town, addressing the numerous domestics who filled the hall. "Quick! let some one go and see for them, for our two illustrious guests are determined to set off as soon as they have eaten their rice. They are in a great hurry, and cannot honour us any longer with their presence."

"Wait a moment," said we; "we are in no hurry. It does not appear that any one here is acquainted with our affairs. In the first place, we have to change palanquins. Those that were given us at Tching-tou-fou will not do. Eh? Master Ting! Is it not here that we were to get the good palanquins with four bearers?"

"No, no!" cried all the Mandarins in concert; "a little place like this! How in the world could you find good palanquins ready here? You must order them beforehand."

"Very well; order them, then. We are in no hurry. Whether we get to Canton a moon sooner or later makes very little difference to us. In the mean time we can amuse ourselves here, by visiting the town and its environs."

"In such a poor place as this," said the prefect,

"there are no skilful workmen to be found. Nobody here knows how to make any other palanquins than those little bamboo ones, for two bearers. The people of this part of the country know nothing of luxury; very few of them have enough to live on. You must go to Tchoung-tching to find great manufactories."

"Yes, yes! you must go to Tchoung-tching," was echoed from all quarters; "Tchoung-tching is the place for fine palanquins. Every one knows that the Mandarins, for eighteen provinces round, all send for their palanquins to Tchoung-tching."

"Is that true?" said we, turning to Master Ting.

"Certainly it is true. Who here would dare to utter lies?"

"In that case, then, find a man who understands these things, and send him directly to Tchoung-tching to get some palanquins. We will wait here. We need a little rest, and we will profit by this opportunity. We speak calmly; but this decision is irrevocable. We shall not alter it."

The Mandarins looked at one another quite stupified.

During the whole of this interesting discussion, the dinner had been going on; and having taken our last cup of tea, we rose to return to our chamber and leave the Mandarins to settle the matter among them.

They had a long debate, which ended in the Chinese fashion, by sending deputations to endeavour to make us change our minds. First came the civil Mandarins, then the military ones, then both orders united; but all found us inflexible. They invented the most absurd tales; they heaped lie upon lie, to prove to us that we must set out immediately. But to all this we had but one answer: "When men like us take a resolution, it is irrevocable."

At last it was announced to us, that palanquins had been brought, and they begged us to come down into the court-yard to examine them. We made no objection; and, after casting a glance at them, said, "Very well; let them be bought."

But thereupon arose a new question. The Mandarins looked at one another, and asked, "Who is to pay?" The discussion became lively, and although we were quite uninterested in it, we asked permission to state our opinion.

"It is very evident," said we, "that the town of Kien-tchoeu is not obliged to provide us with palanquins."

"That is conformable to reason," exclaimed eagerly the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou.

"That ought to have been done at Tching-tou-fou, whence we began our journey; but it would seem that the person who procured us palanquins there, did not act in conformity with the rules of honour."

"That 's the thing," cried the Mandarins; "doubtless he kept for himself a part of the money that was allotted for them."

"Well, we must repair this error, and it does not seem to us that there is any great difficulty. Yesterday, in our passage on the Blue River, we made two days' journey. Master Ting got the money for two stages, and only had to pay for the hire of a boat. It does seem to us, therefore, that he both can and ought to pay the price of the palanquins."

The Mandarins of Kien-tcheou burst out laughing, and said our solution of the problem was capital. Master Ting was foaming with rage, and uttering yells as if his inside were being torn out.

"Compose yourself," said we, "and pay the dealer the

price of these palanquins with a good grace; otherwise we must immediately write to the viceroy that you made us travel on the Blue River." This threat had a wonderful effect, and our conductor began mournfully to count out the cash.

The evening had come, and still there was no talk of our going away; but the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou appeared greatly diverted at the misadventure of Master Ting, not at all suspecting that their turn was coming next.

On the following day, as soon as it was broad daylight, Master Ting presented himself very modestly, to ask whether he might send for the bearers, and at the same time he delivered to us some visiting cards, by which the principal Mandarins of the town expressed to us their good wishes for our journey.

We replied, that he might send the bearers; because it was our intention to go to the communal palace and pass the day there, as we declined lodging at the Hotel of Accomplished Wishes. Our conductor, who had not yet recovered from the shock of the evening before, looked at us with so astonished a face that we were obliged to repeat our words with a little more emphasis. The moment he was sure of our meaning, he left the room and gave the alarm to the Mandarins, who came running one after the other to assure themselves of the truth of the incredible report.

It was the prefect of the town whom we most wished to see; so, as soon as he arrived, we mentioned that he ought to have received from Sse-tchouen a despatch, in which it was directed that we were to be lodged in the communal palace; and that we could not understand why, at Kien-tcheou, the orders of the viceroy had not been executed; that for various reasons we wished to

quit the hotel, and go and pass a day at the communal palace: first, not to establish a bad precedent, and create the temptation to do elsewhere what had been done here; secondly, because, being obliged to write afterwards to the viceroy, to give him an account of the manner in which we had been treated on the road, it would be painful to us to have to point out that at Kien-tcheou they had not executed his orders. "Besides," we added, "the route we have before us is long and fatiguing; we suffered much inconvenience on the Blue River, and we should be very glad of a day's rest."

All these were excellent reasons, but the prefect could see nothing but the expense of entertaining so numerous a party for a whole day at the palace. He did not dare give his true reason, however, and say at once that it would cost too much; the Chinese always prefer less angular methods; a lie is much more convenient. The prefect declared that we should be conferring upon him infinite happiness by remaining another day at Kien-tcheou. Men from the great kingdom of France!—that was indeed a rarity! Moreover, our presence could not fail to bring good fortune to the country; but the communal palace was uninhabitable, it was in so horrible a state that a man of the lowest class could not be lodged in it. It was full of workmen and of the materials for repairs that were about to be made in it. Besides this, there were in the grand saloon seven or eight coffins, containing the dead bodies of official persons of the district, waiting till the members of their respective families should come and take them away to bury them in their native places.

The prefect calculated a good deal on the moral effect of this last argument. While he was speaking in

the most sombre and lugubrious manner of these coffins and dead bodies, he looked attentively into our faces, to see whether he had not alarmed us. But we were rather more inclined to laugh, for we were convinced there was not one word of truth in all that he had been saying.

We replied, in a somewhat ironical tone, that since probably the viceroy was not aware of the communal palace having been converted into a cemetery, it would be well to write to him to that effect; since if he happened to travel this way himself, he might not, perhaps, find it pleasant to take up his abode among coffins and dead bodies; but that as far as we were concerned it did nor make the slightest difference, as we were not much afraid of the living, and not at all of the dead. We should go to the palace, therefore, and did not doubt but that we should be able to make ourselves very comfortable there. The prefect did his utmost to deter us from this "almost insane" project; and at last, to have done with him, we told him that he might settle the matter at his good pleasure, provided only that he would write and sign a statement that we, having wished to rest for a day at the communal palace of Kien-tcheou, had not been allowed to do so on account of its being in an uninhabitable state. The prefect perfectly understood our meaning; and turning to some subaltern officers who were in waiting, he said: "I am of the same way of thinking as our guests; it is absolutely necessary they should have a day of repose. Let orders be immediately sent to the Koung-kouan to take away the coffins and put things as they ought to be, and let the guardians take care not to be again guilty of the same fault." Ten minutes afterwards we were proceeding in state, in

our new palanquins, to the communal palace. As we went out, we just whispered in the ear of Master Ting, "Remember, if we are not properly treated, we will remain two days instead of one." Strange country, in which it is necessary to behave in this way in order not to be oppressed and ill treated yourself.

It would have been really a pity to leave Kien-tcheou without seeing this magnificent palace; and when we had gone over it, we could not help thinking that the Mandarins had been unwilling to let us come in, lest, charmed by its beauty and convenience, we should be unwilling to go out again. After traversing a vast court planted with trees, we ascended to the main building by thirty beautifully cut stone steps. The apartments were spacious, lofty, exquisitely clean, and deliciously cool and fresh; the furniture was richly ornamented with gilding, in an infinite variety of patterns; the hangings were of gorgeous red or yellow silk, the carpets made of woven bamboo-peeling, and painted in the liveliest colours; there were antique bronzes, immense porcelain urns, vases of the most elegant forms, in which flowers and shrubs of the most whimsical appearance were growing: such were the ornaments that we found in this superb abode. Behind the house was an immense garden, in which Chinese industry had exhausted its resources to imitate the freedom and even the capricious sports of nature. It would be difficult to give an exact idea of these curious creations, the taste for which prevailed for a long time in Europe, and on which the rather unsuitable name of English garden has been bestowed by us. There is a little Chinese poem entitled "The Garden of *Sse-ma-kouang*," in which that illustrious historian and great statesman of the Celestial

Empire*, has been pleased to describe all the wonders of his rural retreat; and it will give us much pleasure to offer a translation of this pretty fragment of Chinese literature, which will at the same time throw some light on the character of its author, that famous Sse-ma-kouang who played so important a part under the dynasty of the *Song*, in a social revolution hereafter to be mentioned:—

"Let others," says Sse-ma-kouang, "build palaces to contain their vexations, and display their vanity; I have made myself a retreat to amuse my leisure, and converse with my friends. Twenty acres of land have sufficed for my purpose. In the midst is a great hall, in which I have collected 5000 volumes, to interrogate the wise and converse with the ancient. Towards the south is a pavilion, in the midst of the waters of a rivulet that falls from the hills on the west. Here it forms a deep basin, which afterwards divides into five branches, like the claws of a leopard, and innumerable swans swim on its surface or sport on its banks. On the borders of the first, which flings itself down in repeated cascades, there rises a steep overhanging rock, curved like an elephant's trunk; and the top of this sustains an open pleasure-house to take the fresh air, and see the rubies with which morning adorns the sun at his rising. The second branch divides itself, a little way off, into two canals, round which winds a gallery, with a double terrace bordered with rose and pomegranate trees. The branch from the west bends in the form of a bow towards the north of a solitary

* Sse-ma-kouang was first minister of the Empire, towards the end of the eleventh century, under the dynasty of Song.

bower, where it forms a little islet, covered with sand and shells of various colours; one part is planted with trees always green, the other is adorned with a cottage of reeds and thatch, resembling those of fishermen. The other two branches seem alternately to seek and to fly from one another, as they follow the declivity of a meadow enamelled with flowers, which they keep ever fresh: sometimes they diverge from their beds to form little pearly basins, framed in emerald turf; then they leave the level of the meadow, and descend in two narrow channels, and the waters break against the rocks that oppose their passage, and roar and dash into foam, and then roll off in silver waves, through the winding course they are obliged to take.

"North of the great hall are several summer pavilions, scattered at random about hills which rise one above the other, like a mother above her children; some hang on the declivity of a hill, some are nestled in little gorges, and are only half seen. All the hills are shaded by groves of tufted bamboo, and intersected by gravel paths to which the sun's rays never penetrate.

"To the eastward spreads out a small plain divided into flower beds, square and oval, and defended from the cold winds of the north by a wood of ancient cedars. All these beds are filled with odoriferous plants, medicinal herbs, flowers, and shrubs. Never does spring leave this delicious spot. A little forest of lemon, pomegranate, and orange trees, always loaded with flowers and fruit, completes the prospect. In the midst of this forest, is a mount of verdure which you ascend by a gentle winding slope, that passes several times round it, like the volutes of a shell, and which gradually diminishes to the summit. Here and there,

at short distances, you find seats of soft turf, which invite to repose, and to the contemplation of the garden from various points of view.

"On the west, an avenue of weeping-willows, with their long pendant branches, guides you to the banks of a stream, which falls a few paces further from the brink of a rock covered with ivy and wild grasses of various colours. The environs exhibit a barrier of pointed rocks, fancifully heaped together, and rising in an amphitheatre in a wild and rustic manner. At the bottom of these is a deep grotto, which enlarges as you advance into it, till it forms a kind of irregular saloon with a dome-like roof. The light enters this apartment by an aperture tolerably large, but veiled by branches of the honeysuckle and wild vine. This grotto affords a cool retreat from the burning heats of the dog-days; masses of rock scattered here and there, or broad platforms cut out of the solid rock, form the seats. A little fountain issues from one side, and falls in trickling threads upon the floor, where, after winding about through many crystal rills, it unites again in a reservoir which forms the bath, and afterwards discharges itself into a pond below the grotto. This pond leaves only a narrow path between the shapeless grotesque rocks by which it is enclosed; and these are inhabited by a whole nation of rabbits, that startle the countless swarms of fish in the pond, as much as they are startled by them.

"How charming is this solitude! The broad surface of its watery basin is sprinkled with little islets of shrubs, the larger of which serve as aviaries, and are filled with all kinds of birds. You can pass easily from one to the other by blocks of stone that rise out of the water, and little wooden bridges, some straight,

some arched, some in zig-zag, that cross it. When the lilies with which the borders of the pond are planted, produce their flowers, it appears crowned with purple and scarlet — like the horizon of the seas of the South, when the sun rests on it.

"To leave this solitude you must either turn back, or cross the chain of steep rocks by which it is surrounded. You can ascend to the summit of it by a sort of rude staircase roughly hewn with the pickaxe; and there you find a simple cabinet, unadorned indeed, but yet adorned enough by the view of an immense plain through which the Kiang rolls its flood through rice fields and villages. The innumerable barks with which this mighty river is covered, the labourers tilling the ground, the travellers who are passing along the high-ways, animate this enchanting prospect; and the azure mountains which terminate the horizon, afford repose and recreation to the sight.

"When I am weary of writing and composing in the midst of my books in my great hall, I throw myself into a boat which I row myself, and go and seek the pleasures of my garden. Sometimes I land on the fishing-island, where, with a broad straw hat on my head to protect me from the ardent rays of the sun, I amuse myself with enticing the fish that sport in the water, and study our human passions in their mistakes; or at other times, with my quiver on my shoulder, and my bow in my hand, I climb over the rocks, and there, lying in wait, like a traitor, for the rabbits; as they issue forth, I pierce them with my arrows at the entrance of their holes. Alas! they are wiser than we are, and they fly from what is dangerous to them; if they spy me coming, not one will show himself.

"When I walk in my garden I gather the medicinal plants that I wish to keep; if a flower pleases me, I pluck it, and enjoy its scent; if I see one suffering from thirst, I water it, and its neighbours profit by the shower. How many times have ripe fruits restored to me the appetite that the sight of luxurious dishes had taken away. My pomegranates and my peaches are the better for being gathered by my own hand, and the friends to whom I send them are always pleased by my doing so. Do I see a young bamboo that I wish to leave to grow, I cut it, or I bend and interweave its branches to free the path. The summit of a rock, the banks of a stream, the depths of a wood, all are welcome to me when I wish to repose myself. I enter a pavilion, to watch a stork making war on the fish; but scarcely have I entered, than forgetting what brought me there, I seize my *kin**, and challenge the birds around to rivalry.

"The last rays of the sun surprise me sometimes whilst I am contemplating in silence the tender anxieties of a swallow for her little ones, or the stratagems of a hawk to gain possession of his prey. The moon rises, and I am still sitting there; this is an additional pleasure. The murmuring of the waters, the rustling of the leaves in the wind, the beauty of the heavens, plunge me into a delightful reverie; all nature speaks to my soul; I go wandering about, and listening, and night has reached the middle of its course before I have reached the threshold of my door.

"My friends come too, occasionally, to interrupt my solitude, to read to me their works, or to hear mine. Wine enlivens our frugal repasts, philosophy seasons

* A sort of Chinese violin.

them; and whilst, at court, men are seeking voluptuous pleasure, fostering calumny, forging fetters, and laying snares, we are invoking wisdom, and offering her our hearts. My eyes are constantly turned towards her, but, alas! her rays only beam on me through a thousand clouds: let them be dispersed, even were it by a storm, and this solitude will become for me the temple of felicity. But what do I say? I, a husband, a father, a citizen, a man of letters,—I am bound by a thousand duties, my life is not my own. Adieu, my dear garden! adieu! the love of kindred and of country calls me to the city; keep thy pleasures, that they may some day dissipate anew, some new cares, and save my virtue from their temptations."

The garden of the Communal Palace of Kien-tcheou did not certainly present all the superb features described by the pencil of Sse-ma-kouang, but it was nevertheless one of the finest we had seen in the Celestial Empire. We passed the remainder of the morning in it, and were never tired of admiring the patience of the Chinese, in cutting, out of shrubs and fragments of rock, all the eccentric figures suggested by their whimsical and fertile imaginations.

We were seated under the portico of a miniature pagoda, when Master Ting came to inform us that dinner was ready. The principal functionaries of the place, in rich and brilliant costume, were already assembled in the hall, and their reception of us was most amiable and gracious. We overwhelmed each other with compliments and courtesy, and invited each other reciprocally to the most honourable places. To put an end to this polite contest, we said that the

Koung-kouan being the house of the traveller, we ought to be considered as at home, and should, therefore, of course, treat our guests according to the rites. We assigned, therefore, to each of the company a place according to his rank, reserving the lowest for ourselves, and this proceeding was very graciously received. They began to think we were not quite such uncivilised barbarians as they had taken us to be the evening before.

The banquet was splendid, and served according to all the formalities of Chinese etiquette. On the part of the guests, there could be nothing more desired; indeed, they were so excessively amiable, that we could not for a moment doubt of their having the most lively and earnest desire to get rid of us on the next day.

We will not attempt to describe a Chinese dinner; not but that it might present some details capable of interesting Europeans, but they are already pretty well known, and we should fear trying the reader's patience too far. We remember, also, seeing in the "Mélanges Posthumes" of Abel Remusat, the following passage, which would prevent us from attempting to give the nomenclature of the dishes, even had we been so inclined:—

"Some years ago, (says this clever and learned orientalist,) the officers of a European embassy returning from China, where they had cause to applaud themselves for the success of their operations, thought proper to favour the readers of the 'Gazette' with a description of a repast that had been given to them, they said, by the Mandarins of some frontier town. Never, according to their account, had people been better entertained; the quality of the dishes, the num-

ber of the services, the play performed in the interval, all was exactly described, and produced an admirable effect. But it happened, that some persons who were readers of old books, had a kind of recollection of having seen something like that before, and, on inquiry, it appeared that more than a hundred years back, exactly the same dinner, composed of the very same dishes, and served in precisely the same manner, had been given to some Jesuit missionaries, who had written an account of it. There were many people, however, for whom it was all quite new, and though it may be true, in general, that 'a warmed-up dinner is good for nothing,' in this particular case it was found very acceptable; and the public, always fond of particulars concerning manners and customs, and even of culinary details, cared very little to know who had been the real *diners*. Whoever they might have been, it found just the same amusements in the singularities of the Chinese table etiquette, and the gravity with which the guests, while eating their rice, executed manœuvres and evolutions that would have done honour to a well-trained regiment of infantry."

Since the time when M. Abel Remusat alluded thus playfully to this famous Chinese dinner, it has been served over again many times, especially after the last war of China with England. But the new editions of it that have been published both in English and French, have been unfortunately so much corrected and revised as a little to damage its accuracy. Under pretence, that in the course of a hundred years, the Chinese may have made some discoveries in the culinary art, it has been found amusing to make the public believe that

they prepared dishes with castor oil, and that some of their favourite dainties were shark's fins, fish-gizzards, goose-feet, peacock's combs, and other delicacies of the same description.

Such dishes as these could scarcely have been met with by any one who had made acquaintance with Chinese cookery elsewhere than at Canton, a few yards from the English factories; or, in fact, as Europeans newly landed in China are always very anxious to get invited to a Chinese dinner, in the hope of meeting with some extraordinary things, it is by no means impossible that some of the Canton merchants may have been mischievous enough to amuse themselves at their expense, and serve them up dishes invented expressly for them, and which had never before made their appearance at a Chinese table.

Peacocks are so rare in China that we have ourselves never seen any there. The feathers of this bird are sent to the court by tributary kingdoms, and the Emperor gives them as a special favour to the highest functionaries, with permission to wear them in their caps on state occasions, as an ornament. How, then, can we imagine that dishes made of the peacock's combs can be common at Chinese dinner parties. The castor oil plant is not unknown in China; it is cultivated extensively in the northern provinces, but the oil is used merely for lighting, and so far is it from being regarded as a favourite condiment, that when one day, at a Mission not far from Pekin, we wished to give a small dose of it to one of our brothers who was ill, our Chinese converts vehemently opposed our doing so, saying that this oil was a poison. We do not deny, nevertheless, that Europeans may have seen it on dinner

tables at Canton, but we feel quite sure that, in that case, they have been made the victims of some mystification, and that when they were amusing themselves with the absurd tastes of the Chinese, the latter were in their turn laughing at the credulity of the Europeans.

It is certain, however, that a real Chinese dinner would be a very odd thing in the eyes of a stranger, especially if he were one of those who think, as some people do, that there is only one way of living. To begin dinner with the dessert, and end it with the soup; to drink the wine smoking hot, out of little china cups, and have your food brought to you ready cut up into small pieces, and to be presented with a couple of sticks, instead of a knife and fork, to eat it with; to have, instead of napkins, a provision of little bits of coloured silk paper by the side of your plate, which, as you use, the attendants carry off; to leave your place between the courses, to smoke or amuse yourself; and to raise your chop-sticks to your forehead, and then place them horizontally upon your cup, to signify that you have finished your dinner;—all these things would doubtless seem very odd, and create the curiosity of Europeans. The Chinese, on the other hand, can never get over their surprise at our way of dining. They ask how we can like to drink cold fluids, and what can have put it into our heads to make use of a trident to carry food to our mouths, at the risk of pricking our lips or poking our eyes out. They think it very droll to see nuts put on the table in their shells, and ask why our servants cannot take the trouble to peel the fruit, and take the bones out of the meat. They are themselves certainly not very difficult in the

nature of their food, and like such things as fried silk-worms and preserved larvæ, but they cannot understand the predilection of our epicures for *high* game, nor for cheese that appears to belong to the class of animated beings.

One day, at Macao, we had the honour to be seated at the dinner table of a representative of a European power, when a magnificent dish of snipes was brought in. But what a disappointment! The Chinese Vatel had taken out the entrails of this incomparable bird. He knew not what a perfumed and savoury treasure the snipe holds in its stomach. The cook was forced to appear before the arbiters of taste, who received him with wrathful looks, and the delinquent was struck with consternation on hearing that he had committed a culinary crime too heavy to be a second time pardoned. Hoping to make amends, the unfortunate cook, a few days afterwards, took care to serve up in all their integrity some birds that were not snipes, and thereupon a new storm of wrath fell on the devoted head of the poor Chinese, and was followed by his dismissal, in a state of utter despair that he should ever be able to exercise his art in a manner conformable to the astoundingly capricious tastes of Europeans.

All the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, without exception, are gifted with a remarkable aptitude for cookery. If you want a cook, it is the easiest thing in the world to supply the want; you have but to take the first Chinese you can catch, and after a few days' practice he will acquit himself of his duties to admiration.

What appears most surprising, is the extreme simplicity of means with which these marvels are performed.

One single iron pot suffices to execute promptly the most difficult combinations. The Mandarins are in general pretty much of *gourmands*, and carry the business and refinements of the table to a tolerably high pitch. They have in their service, cooks who possess a vast store of receipts, and secrets to disguise dishes in a thousand ways, and change their natural flavour; and when they desire to show off their skill, they really perform surprising feats. The cook at Kien-tcheou gave us some most incontestable proofs of talent, and his dinner merited and received the praises of all the guests. During the whole day, the Mandarins of Kien-tcheou behaved in the most admirable manner, and on the following morning we resolved, by way of return, to afford them the satisfaction of seeing us go away. We parted most excellent friends, but without any very particular wish to meet again.

The roads that we now traversed were far from being equal to those in the environs of Tching-tou-fou, and indeed the system of roads in China, is far from being perfect. The communication by land is generally inconvenient, and often dangerous.

In the neighbourhood of the great towns the roads are sufficiently wide, but by degrees as you advance they grow narrower, till at last they sometimes vanish altogether. Then the travellers make their way wherever they can, through fields, quagmires and rocky barren tracts.

If you come to a brook over which the local government has not thought proper to make a bridge, you must take off your shoes and stockings and wade through it. But very often you find some poor creatures stationed on the banks, who make a business of carrying travellers on their shoulders, from one side to the other,

for the value of a few sapecks. All this route, nevertheless, still bears the name of a great high road.

This deplorable state of things has not always existed in China; formerly, it appears, there were means of communication that left nothing to desire and in almost all the provinces you may still see remains of these fine roads, paved with broad flag-stones, and bordered with magnificent trees. In the Annals, especial mention is made of the superb roads that, under the Song dynasty traversed the Empire from one end to the other; and the dynasty of *Yuen* added to this an admirable system of canals, that increased still more the facility of travelling, and the transport of merchandise. But these great works have been abandoned under the Mantchoo-Tartar Emperors, who, instead of maintaining them, have even hastened their destruction. Trees have been cut down, flag-stones torn up, and the land annexed to the neighbouring fields; indeed, with the system of pillage that prevails at present all over the Empire, we were almost surprised to find a single tree standing, or a flag-stone in its place. The canals have suffered less, and the government has even occasionally taken some pains to maintain them. They are, however, rapidly deteriorating; the famous Imperial canal, which traverses the Empire from north to south, is dry the greater part of the year, and scarcely serves any other purpose, than that of transporting the tributes of corn and other natural productions to the public granaries at Pekin.

At the distance of one day's journey from Kien-tcheou, the road becomes mountainous and irregular, and the country less beautiful and less rich. The aspect of the population, too, is no longer the same; their appearance is rougher and coarser, and their

manners are by no means so polished. The dilapidation of the farms and the dirtiness of the villages show that the condition of the people is less prosperous.

The mountains, nevertheless, have nothing wild and rugged in their aspect; their summits are crowned with flowers, and their slopes and valleys present abundant harvests of *kao-leang* maize, sugar-cane, and tobacco. The kao-leang is a variety of the *Holcus Sorghum*, of which we in France make nothing but brooms; but it is cultivated on a large scale, and with great care, in China. It attains an astonishing size; its stalks are solid enough to be used with advantage in the construction of farm-houses and palings; the ears furnish a considerable quantity of large seeds, which the poor eat instead of rice; and from which, by distillation, a liquor may be obtained containing a large proportion of alcohol. The Chinese attach in general little importance to the culture of maize, and it is almost always of indifferent quality. They gather the ears before they are completely ripe, and when they are still quite milky, and devour them thus, after slight roasting. Sugar is very common in China, and is obtained from the cane, which grows luxuriantly in the southern provinces; but the Chinese do not know how to purify it and give it the whiteness and brilliancy it obtains in the European refineries. Their factories deliver it in the state of moist sugar, or simply crystallised. The cultivation of tobacco is immense, although this plant which is at present spread over the whole surface of the globe, and is in use among all nations, even those least in contact with civilised life, was not known in China, it is said, till a very recent period. It is stated to have been imported into the Central Empire

by the Mantchoos; and the Chinese were much astonished when they first saw their conquerors inhaling fire through long tubes, and "eating smoke." It cost them a good deal to imitate the accomplishment; but now they are passionately, enthusiastically devoted to it. By a curious coincidence this plant is called in the Mantchoo language *tambakou*, but the Chinese designate it simply by the word meaning *smoke*. Thus they say they cultivate in their fields the "smoke leaf;" they chew smoke, and they name their pipe the "smoke funnel."

The use of tobacco has become universal throughout the Empire; men, women, children, everybody smokes, almost without ceasing. They go about their daily business, cultivate the fields, ride on horseback and write, constantly with the pipe in their mouths. During their meals, if they stop for a moment it is to smoke a pipe; and if they wake in the night, they are sure to amuse themselves in the same way. It may be easily supposed, therefore, that in a country containing 300,000,000 of smokers, without counting the tribes of Tartary and Thibet, who lay in their stocks in the Chinese markets, the culture of tobacco has become very important. The cultivation is entirely free, every one being at liberty to plant it in his garden, or in the open fields, in whatever quantity he chooses, and afterwards to sell it, wholesale or retail, just as he likes, without the Government interfering with him in the slightest degree. The most celebrated tobacco is that obtained in *Leao-tong*, in Mantchuria, and in the province of Ssc-tchouen. The leaves, before becoming articles of commerce, undergo various preparatory processes, according to the practice of the locality. In the

south they cut them into extremely fine filaments; the people of the north content themselves with drying them, and rubbing them up coarsely, and then stuff them at once into their pipes.

Snuff-takers are less numerous in China than smokers; tobacco in powder, or as the Chinese say "smoke for the nose," is little used except by the Mantchoo Tartars and Mongols, and among the Mandarins and lettered classes. The Tartars are real amateurs, and snuff is with them an object of the most important consideration. For the Chinese aristocracy, on the contrary, it is a mere luxury—a habit that they try to acquire—a whim. The custom of taking snuff was introduced into China by the old missionaries, who resided at the court. They used to get the snuff from Europe for themselves, and some of the Mandarins tried it, and found it good. By degrees the custom spread; people who wished to appear fashionable liked to be seen taking this "smoke for the nose," and Pekin is still, *par excellence*, the locality of snuff-takers. The first dealers in it made immense fortunes. The French tobacco was the most esteemed; and as it happened at this time that it had for a stamp the ancient emblem of the three *fleur de lis*, the mark has never been forgotten; and the three *fleur de lis* are still in Pekin the only sign of a dealer in tobacco.

The Chinese have now for a long time manufactured their own snuff; but they do not subject it to any fermentation, and it is not worth much. They merely pulverise the leaves, sift the powder till it is as fine as flour, and afterwards perfume it with flowers and essences. The Chinese snuff-boxes are little vials made of crystal, porcelain, or precious stones. They

are sometimes very elegant in their form, and are cut with great taste and sold at immense prices. A little silver or ivory spatula, with which the pinch is taken out, is fitted to the stopper.

The sun had not quite set when we arrived at Tchoung-king, a town of the first order, and, after Tching-tou-fou, the most important of the province of Sse-tchouen; it is advantageously situated on the left bank of the Blue River. On the other side, opposite to Tchoung-king, is another great town, which would only make one with the first mentioned, but for the great breadth of the river. It is a great centre of commerce, and a depôt for the merchandise of almost all the provinces of the Empire.

There is also here a numerous and flourishing Christian community, as the Ambassador Ki-chan, and the Viceroy Pao-king, had already informed us. We expected consequently to receive visits from the principal Christians, as they could not fail to have been aware of our arrival, but no one appeared. In the evening we expressed our surprise at this to Master Ting, who then admitted that in fact a great number of persons had presented themselves, but that they had not been permitted to enter, as they wore no costume of ceremony, and had the appearance of being tiresome, vulgar people. "They did say, indeed," added he; "that they belonged to your illustrious and sublime religion, the religion of the Lord of Heaven, but we did not believe them."

The guardians of the Communal Palace were certainly in some measure to blame in this matter; but we did not wish to complain, as it was possible they might think themselves in the right. It had been agreed, in

order to protect us from the annoyance of incessant crowds of visitors, that no one should be admitted to us in the Communal Palaces without their observing all the forms and ceremonies prescribed by the Rites for official visits of etiquette. In the "Mélanges" of Oriental literature by M. Abel Remusat, some tolerably exact details are given concerning the manner of making ceremonious visits in China, borrowed from a Chinese manuscript in the Imperial library.

"Much has been said concerning Chinese politeness, the formalities which it imposes every moment, and on the smallest occasions. It has been asserted, not quite without truth, that, in accordance with these, a conversation between men not connected by friendship becomes a mere preconcerted dialogue, in which each repeats a part he has learnt by heart; but the specimens of this polite dialogue that have been inserted in some accounts are not in general very accurate. Those which Fourmont has given, after Father Varo, are full of error. Although most people know something of the exaggerated forms of expression, which among ancient nations appear to be the product of long-continued habits of social life, it is still curious to see in detail how far it is possible to carry these refinements of urbanity, by which every one endeavours to show his own good breeding."

To judge of this point as relating to the Chinese, we must translate literally the customary forms of speech; and in order to compare the manners of different nations, in this respect, we must have an exact interpretation of a Chinese conversation. But I will first

explain the general principles of visiting, for a matter of this importance deserves to be treated methodically.

It is a custom in China, as it is in Europe, to get rid of a visitor you do not wish to see, by saying you are not at home, without being over anxious that he should really believe it; or you have it stated that you are indisposed, overwhelmed with business, and so on. The servants are instructed, on such occasions, to take the visiting cards, and inquire the addresses of the visitors, in order that the master may, in a few days, return the visits he has *not* received.

In a Chinese romance there is a scene of three lettered Chinese, who are amusing themselves with making verses, and drinking warm wine, when a very troublesome and disagreeable old Mandarin is announced.

"Stupid fellow," says the master to his servant; "why didn't you say I was not at home?"

"I did," replies the servant, "but he saw the palanquins of these two noble visitors before the door, and he would not believe me."

Thereupon the master rises, puts on his cap of ceremony, and runs with affected eagerness to meet the disagreeable visitor, whom he overwhelms with compliments, while the two learned guests, who detest him, vie with the master of the house in their polite welcome. Would any one believe that this scene, which is well described, was represented as passing at a hundred and four degrees of longitude from Paris?

He who intends paying a visit usually sends a servant some hours before, with a note to the person he wishes to see, to inquire whether he is at home, and to

beg him not to go out if he has leisure to receive the visit. This is a mark of deference and respect for those whom you wish to see in their own houses. The note is on a sheet of red paper, larger or smaller according to the rank and dignity of the persons, and the degree of respect to be testified. The paper is folded once or twice, and you only write on the second page, in such words as these, "Your disciple, or your younger brother, So-and-so, has come to bow his head to the ground before you, and to offer you his respects."

This phrase is written in very large letters when you wish to mingle a certain air of stateliness with your courtesy; and the characters become smaller and smaller in proportion to the interest that one has in appearing humble and respectful.

This note having been presented to the porter, if the master accepts the visit, he replies, verbally, "It will give me pleasure, and I beg him to come." If you are busy, or have some reason for not receiving the visit, the answer is — "I am much obliged; I thank him for the trouble he proposes to take." But if the visitor be a person of superior rank, it is — "My lord does me an honour that I had not dared to hope for."

These sorts of visits are seldom declined in China.

If no note has been received to announce the visit, which only happens with common people, or in case of pressing business, the visitor may be requested to wait, but he is to be told what occupation prevents the host from receiving him: "My master begs you to be seated for a moment — he is combing his hair — or dressing himself." But if the visit has been announced previously by a note, the master of the house must put on fine clothes, and hold himself in readiness to receive the

guests at the door of the house, or as he alights from his palanquin, saying, "I beg you to enter." The two leaves of the centre door must be opened, for it would be impolite to allow the guest to enter by a side one. Great people have their palanquins carried in, or even ride in on horseback to the foot of the staircase, which leads to the hall of reception. The master of the house then places himself at their right hand, and afterwards passes to their left, saying, "I beg you to go first," and accompanies them, keeping always a little behind.

In a room where company is received, the seats ought to be arranged in two parallel lines, one before the other. In entering you begin, from the very bottom of the room, to make your bows,—that is to say, you turn towards your host, making one step backward, and bow till your hands, which are kept clasped, touch the ground. In the provinces of the south of China, the south side is the most honourable; but in the north it is quite the contrary. Of course, the most honourable side is to be offered to the guest; but he, by an ingenious piece of courtesy, may in two words change the state of things, and say, *Pe li*, that is, "We are now observing the ceremony of the north country," which implies, "I hope that in placing me to the south you are assigning me the least distinguished place."

But the master of the house politely hastens to frustrate the humble intentions of his guest, by saying, *Nan li*, "Not at all, sir; it is the ceremony of the south, and you are, therefore, in your proper place." Sometimes the visitor himself affects to take the least honourable, but then the host excuses himself, saying, "I should not dare;" and, passing before his guest, taking care not to turn his back on him, he proceeds to his

proper position, a little behind. Then they both bow; and if the master of the house has any relations who live with him, the bows have to be repeated, as many times as there are persons to salute. These manœuvres last for some time, and as long as they do, nothing else is said than *Pou-kan, pou-kan*, "I should not dare."

One piece of politeness, which is the due of great people, and which does not displease those of inferior rank, is to cover the chairs with little carpets made on purpose. Then there are more antics to be performed. The guest refuses to take the chair of state; the host insists; he makes a feint of wiping the chair with the skirt of his robe; and the stranger does the same for the chair that he is to occupy: finally, the guest bows to his chair before sitting down, and neither party takes his place till he has exhausted all the resources of ceremony and good education.

Scarcely are you seated before the servants bring the tea, in little porcelain cups ranged on a tea-board of varnished wood. Among rich people, tea-pots are not used, but the quantity of tea required is put into the cup, and the boiling water poured upon it. The infusion is highly scented, but is taken without sugar. The master of the house approaches the most important of his guests, saying, as he touches the tea-board, *Tsing-tcha*, "I invite you to take tea," and then every one advances to take his cup. The master takes one in both hands, and presents it to the most distinguished guest, who receives it also with both hands. The rest of the company take their cups, and drink together, though inviting each other by gestures to drink first. When every one is served, the visitors, holding their cups in both hands, bow to the ground, taking care not

to spill the smallest drop of the tea, which would be very indecorous; and to lessen the liability to such an accident the cups are only half filled. The most elegant manner of serving tea is to give with it a little dried sweetmeat and a small spoon used only for this purpose. The guests drink their tea at many sips, and very slowly, though all together, in order to be ready at the same moment to put down their cups. However hot it may be, you must not exhibit any annoyance, but politely burn your throat or your fingers.

When the weather is very warm, the master of the house, as soon as the tea is drunk, takes his fan, and, holding it in both hands, bows to the company, as if to say, *Tsing-chen*, "I invite you to make use of your fans." Every one accordingly takes his fan; and it would be exceedingly rude not to bring one with you, as you would then prevent others from using theirs.

The conversation must always begin on indifferent, and mostly insignificant, subjects, and this is, perhaps, the most difficult part of the ceremonial. In China you generally have to pass about two hours in saying nothing, and then, at the end of the visit, you explain in three words what really brings you there.

The visitor rises and says, "I have been troublesome to you a very long time;" and, doubtless, of all Chinese compliments, this is the one that most frequently approaches the truth.

Before leaving the room, you bow in the same manner as on entering it, the master keeping to the left and a little behind, and following as far as the horse or the palanquin. Before mounting, the stranger entreats the master to leave him, that he may not be guilty of so great a disrespect as turning his back; but the other

contents himself with turning half round, that he may not see him mount. When the visitor is seated on his horse, or that his bearers have raised the poles of his palanquin, the *tsing-leao*, or adieu, is exchanged, and this is the last civility.

Such is the almost invariable order observed in visits between people of equal condition, though of course it is liable to modification, according to particular circumstances, such as the rank, the age, the occupation, the amount of personal distinction, &c. —A volume might be written to describe all the variations, and it may easily be supposed that in China such books have not been wanting. On the whole, however, it is easier to be polite in China than elsewhere, as politeness is subject to more fixed regulations, and every one knows what he has to do in any given situation. It is, of course, a great restraint, but still it has its advantages.

The degree of etiquette that we had adopted, in conformity to the advice of the viceroy, prescribed to our visitors to send in advance a card of large dimensions, and when they came, to present themselves in full dress. By this means, we were enabled to avoid many troublesome visits, without exposing ourselves to the charge of rudeness. We regretted, however, to find that this plan kept away the Christians, whom our Mandarins took care not to inform previously of the conditions required, in order to be received.

We explained to Master Ting how glad we should be to see the worshippers of the Lord of Heaven, and we begged him to use his good offices to bring us together; but as we had no great reliance on his wish to oblige us, we endeavoured to adopt, on our own parts, some more effectual means.

The night that we passed at Tchoung-king was

marked by an incident so strange and fantastic, that the narration of it might very well pass for a ghost story. We declare, therefore, beforehand, that it is not a fiction, and that we were not the victims of any hallucination. We were in bed, and sound asleep, when we seemed to hear, as if in a dream, a measured and sonorous sound, moving at intervals through the courts, the gardens, and the different apartments of the Communal Palace. The sound seemed sometimes far off, and sometimes in our own room. We thought we could distinguish a slight crackling of the bamboo mats, as by the steps of some one walking cautiously, so as not to be heard; sometimes we seemed to be in a strong light, then, again, in profound darkness; a voice that was turned towards our ear articulated some words that we could not make out, and then the peculiar measured sound moved away, to approach us again after a time. We were still quite asleep, but with something of the oppressive feeling of a nightmare, for, notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not either open our eyes or utter a word. At length we felt something like a blow on the shoulder, and afterwards a violent shock, that awakened us at once with a start, and we found ourselves surrounded by a dazzling light, and saw opposite us a hideous face that began to laugh, and showed us its long and yellow teeth. The spectre stretched out a naked withered arm, and presented us, with a grave air, a paper, on which were written European characters.

We drew back instinctively, and not knowing very well where we were. The spectre began to laugh again, drew back his arm, took in his left hand the torch he had been holding in his right, and made the sign of the Cross. And, now that our eyes had become capable

of distinguishing objects a little more clearly, we saw that we had to do with a real living Chinese, very ugly, strangely attired, and naked to the waist.

When he saw that we were awake, he bowed towards us, and said in a low voice, that he was a Christian, and that he had brought us a letter from Monseigneur de Sinite, coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic for the province of Sse-tchouen. He then lit a lamp that stood on a little table by the side of the bed; we opened the letter that had reached us in so curious and phantasmagorical a manner, and whilst we read, our Christian retired, and began again to pace the apartments of the Communal Palace, striking the floor from time to time with a piece of bamboo. This man, it appeared, filled the office of night watchman.

Monseigneur Desfleches, Bishop of Sinite, whom we had known at Macao, in 1839, had his residence in the town of Tchoung-king. After having expressed his regret at not being able to quit the retreat in which he was hidden, to pay a visit to his countrymen, he entered into some details concerning the persecutions that the Christians were still suffering, notwithstanding the edicts of religious liberty obtained by the French Ambassador. His lordship pointed out to us, that in a town of the third order, called Tchang-checu, in which we were to pass some days, the first magistrate had just sent three Christians to prison; and he gave us all the information necessary to claim their release, when we should have arrived in the town.

The Christian who had brought us the letter had taken care to deposit some paper, a Chinese pen and an inkstand on the table by the bedside, and we replied immediately to the communication of Monseigneur Desfleches, assuring him that we would do all that depended on us to obtain

the release of his dear prisoners. We profited at the same time by this opportunity, to beg him to warn the Christians, who might wish to visit us at the Communal Palace, of the necessity of conforming to the regulations of "the rites."

We wrote this letter under a feeling of the deepest dejection. A missionary—a Frenchman, one whom we had known, and had not seen for so long—was here, almost close to us, yet we could not join him, embrace him, nor converse with him on any of those topics that thrill the soul of the missionary, such as the sufferings of the Christians, the trials of those who preach the Gospel, nor of our country, that France, from which we had had no news for three years. So sweet a consolation was denied us, and we were reduced merely to writing a few lines to him in haste and secrecy in the middle of the night.

In the life of the missionary, hunger, thirst, the inclemencies of the seasons, all the tortures of the body, are as nothing in comparison with these moral sufferings, these privations of the heart, to which it is so difficult to accustom oneself. While we were thus carrying on this singular and contraband correspondence, our cunning Christian continued his rounds through the different quarters of the Communal Palace, not forgetting from time to time to strike with his bamboo instrument the various watches of the night. When we had finished the letter, he concealed it carefully in the folds of his girdle, and tranquilly resumed his march.

The Chinese have, in all circumstances, an inexhaustible store of tricks and artifices at their disposal, and the Christians of Tchoung-king, wishing to convey to us secretly M. Desfleches' letter, had contrived to in-

troduce one of their number into the Palace. A poor artisan, an unlikely person to excite any suspicion, offered himself to the guardians in the quality of night watchman, taking care to ask much lower wages than are commonly given to the people who exercise this kind of industry. The offer was accepted to the great satisfaction of the Christians of Tchoung-king, who were glad to be able to send us the letter, and perhaps at the same time not sorry to play the police a trick, for the Chinese are fully awake to this favourite amusement of old civilised nations.

Night watchmen are much in fashion in all the provinces of China; they are especially regularly employed in the pagodas, the tribunals and the hotels, and rich private persons have them also in their service. These men are obliged to walk all night in the places confided to their vigilance, and to make a noise by striking at intervals on a tam-tam or an instrument of bamboo. The purpose of this noise is politely to intimate to the thieves that people are on their guard, and that consequently the moment is not favourable for breaking open doors or through walls. In some towns the Government also maintains watchmen organised as a patrol to traverse the streets, maintain public tranquillity, and give notice in case of fire. They stop for a moment in each quarter, and after having struck three times on their bronze tam-tams, they cry in unison *Lou-chan lou-hia—siao-sin-ho*, that is to say, "Beware of fire on the ground-floor—beware of fire on the upper-floor."

Fires are very frequent in China, especially in the southern provinces, where the houses are mostly built of wood. The practice of smoking continually too, and of having fire almost always in readiness for making

tea, must be the cause of many accidents; indeed, when you have lived some time among them, and seen how careless the Chinese are, and what a disorderly state their houses are in, you are surprised that fires do not happen oftener.

The first thing they dread when fire does break out, however, is, not the fire, but the thieves, who come running in from all quarters, under the pretence of extinguishing the fire, but really to increase the confusion, forcing themselves in everywhere, and carrying off whatever they can lay hands on, as if to snatch it from the flames. It is a regular pillage, and what people are most anxious about whose house is on fire, is to prevent the public from coming to their assistance. They hasten to move away their goods as fast as they can, and the neighbours are obliged to do the same, for the plunderers have the ready pretext of stopping the progress of the fire, for dismantling the houses, and appropriating even the very building materials, when they can get nothing else,—a small profit is better than none. It may easily be imagined what a fire is with such helps as these; a few hours are generally sufficient for the disappearance of two or three hundred houses.

In many towns, however, the administration does show some anxiety to stop these abominable attempts. They maintain, as we have said, a patrol in the streets to give warning. They have large tubs standing filled with water, and there even exists in some places a more or less well organised body of firemen.

The moment a fire is perceived to have broken out, it is the duty of the Mandarins to repair to the spot, with this troop, and the agents of police, in order to drive away the populace, who seem always disposed by

instinct to become transformed into a band of robbers. The Chinese fire-engines are constructed very much like our own, but they bear the name of "Aquatic, or Marine Dragon,"—*loung* or *yang loung*.

The word *yang loung* might, perhaps, be more correctly translated European Dragon, which would tend to show that they are of European importation, and that the Chinese can sometimes be prevailed on to adopt the customs of foreign countries.

One thing that always excited our admiration was the surprising activity with which the Chinese begin to rebuild their houses after they have been burnt down. Scarcely have the firemen disappeared, than the masons and carpenters take possession of the still smoking ground. They are not, however, usually the same proprietors who rebuild houses; these are mostly ruined, and vanish, going wherever they can; but such is the eagerness for trade and speculation in this country, that, while the flames are still devouring the houses, a crowd of purchasers present themselves to buy the ground, and build new ones; and the contract of sale is drawn up almost by the light of the fire.

Immediately the ground is cleared, as if by enchantment; and it is usual to carry the rubbish to the spot where the fire first broke out, and heap it up there, throwing the expense of clearing it off upon the person whom the law supposes guilty of negligence, and therefore ordains this practice as his punishment. You frequently see in the interior of towns great heaps of ruins that have no other origin than this.

We left Tchoung-king rather late on the following morning, to go and pass the day at the neighbouring town. We had only to cross the Blue River, though

it was possible that its very rapid current might present some difficulties; but we arrived quite safely at the other side, and Master Ting did not fail to claim all the merit of the success. He had made choice, he said, of a boat of the most perfect construction, and boatmen of tried intelligence; moreover, he had repeated litanies to Kao-wang all the time he was smoking his opium; and Kao-wang, in return, had commanded the river to carry us quietly over.

Our little adventure at Kien-tcheou had, it seems, made some noise, and the Mandarins, seeing that we were not inclined to favour their manœuvres at our own expense, thought proper to submit. As soon as we got to Tchoung-king, we could perceive the good effects of our firmness. We found the Communal Palace completely ready, and in full trim, and every one endeavouring to make themselves agreeable; so that, of course, we did what we could to reward this friendly attention, by taking ourselves away again as quickly as possible.

The authorities here added to our escort a military Mandarin and eight soldiers; and they did not fail to inform the people in the town that they did so in order to increase the grandeur of our appearance, or, as they say in China, "to display the character of haughty majesty."

We thanked the Prefect for his courtesy, and left him all the merit of his pretended generosity, though we knew that the measure had really been ordered by the viceroy on account of the gangs of thieves that infest the road we were about to traverse, as far as the boundaries of the province. The new Mandarin was one of the heroes of the famous expedition sent to Canton

against the English in 1842; but, although he had been engaged in the war against the "Western Devils," his appearance was not very warlike. He had a loose, shambling gait, a face that looked as if it were made of *papier maché*, and a mouth always foolishly half open. As there was, too, a considerable amount of self-importance in his manners, we had some suspicion that we should not get on very well together. From our very first interview, on the strength of having, during his stay at Canton, often taken a walk before the European factories, he gave himself such airs of familiarity, that we were obliged to recall him to the observance of the Rites.

After leaving the banks of the Blue River, we arrived at *Tchang-cheou-hien*, a town of the third order. This was where the three Christians of whom M. Desfleches had spoken were imprisoned. As soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace, the Prefect of the town came with all his staff to pay us a visit according to the established rules. We received him with all possible solemnity, in presence of our Mandarin conductors; and when we had exhausted the common-places of conversational etiquette, we inquired whether there were many Christians in the district. "They are very numerous," he replied.

"Are they worthy people—endeavouring to improve their hearts and to live according to the precepts of Christian virtue?"—"How can the people be otherwise than good who follow your holy doctrine?"—"You are right; those who follow faithfully the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven cannot fail to be virtuous men. Your great Emperor, in an edict that he addressed to all the tribunals, has proclaimed that the

Christian religion has no other object than to teach men to fly from what is evil and to practise what is good. He permits his subjects, therefore, throughout the extent of the empire to follow this religion; and he forbids all Mandarins, great or small, to seek after or persecute the Christians. Doubtless, the Imperial edict has reached the town, and you are acquainted with it?"—"The will of the Emperor is like the heat and light of the sun,—it penetrates everywhere; it has reached even this poor town."

"So we supposed; but the common people, in their moments of idleness, like to invent silly stories, quite without reason; and they pretend, that in the tribunal of Tchang-cheou-hien, you pay no respect to the Imperial will. Foolish tongues have even gone so far as to say that three Christians of the town of Tchang-cheou-hien have been arrested within these few days, and are now shut up in your tribunal. What are we to think of these rumours?"—"That they are idle and false. The people of these countries are given to lying, and one must pay no attention to what they say. It is well known that the Christians are most virtuous men. Who, then, should dare to put them in prison, especially after the edict that the Emperor has issued?"

"It is indeed difficult to believe that a man like you could be guilty of such a rash action."

"The wise listen to the talk of the multitude, but they know how to discern truth from falsehood."

After this aphorism, we returned to the commonplaces again, to the great satisfaction of the Prefect, who was, doubtless, pluming himself in his own mind on having so completely mystified us. He retired quite in a state of self-glorification, distributing ma-

jestic salutes to the company, and strutting and swelling like a turkey-cock.

As soon as he had left the palace, we said to Master Ting, "Now take a pencil, and write." We dictated to him the names, the ages, and professions of the three Christians who were lying in prison; and we then begged him to go immediately to the tribunal, and present this paper to the Prefect, telling him at the same time that the three men thus indicated were now shut up in his prisons: that he had just now been lying most impudently; but that we had been willing to spare him, and not put him to shame before the public — since the authority of a magistrate has always need to be surrounded with honour.

The Prefect's tribunal was quite close to the Communal Palace, and as soon as Master Ting arrived, we heard the sound of the tam-tam, and the clamour made according to custom by the satellites as the judge takes his seat to administer justice. Almost immediately afterwards the three Christians, restored to liberty, came to pay their respects to us, and express their gratitude, and the Prefect's scribe was commissioned at the same time to inform us that his master had been wholly ignorant of their imprisonment; that the fault lay entirely with a subaltern officer, an audacious man, and ignorant of the law, who had already before committed similar mistakes, and whom he would not fail to punish. According to the law of Chinese politeness, we were obliged to listen to these new lies as if they were indisputable truths.

The immediate motive for imprisoning these Christians was, that they had refused to conform to certain superstitious practices of the Chinese in times of drought,

the object of which is to obtain rain from the Dragon of Water. When these droughts are prolonged, and occasion any fears for the harvest, it is customary for the Mandarin of the district to make a proclamation, prescribing the most rigorous abstinence. Neither fermented liquors, meat of any kind, fish, eggs, or animal food of any description is allowable; nothing is to be eaten but vegetables. Every housekeeper has to fasten over his door strips of yellow paper, on which are printed some formulas of invocation, and the image of the Dragon of Rain. If heaven is deaf to this kind of supplication, collections are made, and scaffolds erected, for the performance of superstitious dramas; and, as a last resource, they organise a burlesque and extravagant procession, in which an immense dragon, made of wood or paper, is carried about to the sound of infernal music.

Sometimes it happens that, do what they will, the dragon is obstinate, and will not give rain, and then the prayers are changed into curses; he who was before surrounded with honours is insulted, reviled, and torn to pieces by his rebellious worshippers.

It is related that under Kia-king, fifth Emperor of the Mantchoo-Tartar dynasty, a long drought had desolated several provinces of the North; but as, notwithstanding numerous processions, the dragon persisted in not sending rain, the indignant Emperor launched against him a thundering edict, and condemned him to perpetual exile on the borders of the river Ili, in the province of Torgot. The sentence was about to be executed, and the criminal was proceeding with touching resignation to cross the deserts of Tartary and undergo his punishment on the frontiers of Turkestan, when the supreme courts of Pekin, touched with compassion, went in a

body, to throw themselves at the feet of the Emperor, and ask pardon for the poor devil.

His Imperial Majesty then deigned to revoke the sentence, and a courier was sent off at full gallop to carry the news to the executors of the Imperial decree. The dragon was reinstated in his functions, but only on condition that in future he would acquit himself of them a little better. Do the Chinese of our days, it will be asked, really put faith in such monstrous practices? Not the least in the world. All this is merely an external and completely lying demonstration. The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire observe these ancient superstitions without at all believing in them. What was done in times past, they continue to do in the present day, but solely because their ancestors did so, and what their ancestors have established they are always unwilling to change.

CHAP. VI.

BAD AND DANGEROUS ROAD. — LEANG-CHAN, A TOWN OF THE THIRD ORDER. — DISPUTES BETWEEN OUR CONDUCTORS AND THE MANDARINS OF LEANG-CHAN. — A DAY OF REST. — NUMEROUS VISITS OF CHRISTIANS. — A MILITARY MANDARIN OF OUR ESCORT COMPROMISES HIMSELF. — HE IS EXCLUDED FROM OUR TABLE. — GREAT TRIAL PRESIDED OVER BY THE MISSIONARIES. — DETAILS OF THIS SINGULAR TRIAL. — ACQUITTAL OF A CHRISTIAN, AND CONDEMNATION OF A MANDARIN. — TRIUMPHAL DEPARTURE FROM LEANG-CHAN. — SERVITUDE AND ABJECT STATE OF WOMEN IN CHINA. — THEIR RESTORATION BY CHRISTIANITY. — MASTER TING DECLARES THAT WOMEN HAVE NO SOULS. — INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN THE CONVERSION OF NATIONS. — ARRIVAL AT YAO-TCHANG. — HOTEL OF THE BEATITUDES. — LODGINGS IN A THEATRE. — NAVIGATION OF THE BLUE RIVER. — PLAYS AND PLAYERS IN CHINA.

On leaving Tchong-cheoü-hien we remarked that the bearers were taller, more vigorous, and more agile than usual; and they carried us away with an ease and rapidity that were perfectly astonishing. Master Ting told us, as he passed by, that these were men selected on purpose, as the road was likely to be toilsome and dangerous.

We were not, in fact, long before we entered a mountainous district, intersected by deep ravines, where the roads were nothing more than narrow sloping paths cut in the clay, and moistened by an abundant rain, that had fallen incessantly during the previous night. We would much rather have proceeded on foot; but it would have been impossible for us long to maintain our equilibrium on this slippery ground.

We were assured that of the two, there was less danger in remaining in the palanquins.

The bearers, being in the habit of passing along these miserable roads, begged us to trust in the steadiness of their legs; and we did confide a little in them, and much in Providence.

These poor bearers advanced, supporting themselves as well as they could on an iron-pointed staff, which they stuck from time to time into the clay; but although of course this manœuvre was of a nature to slacken their march, they proceeded, nevertheless, with such a rapidity as to make us fairly giddy. Now and then they involuntarily made some odd capers, and the palanquin rocked from side to side in a very undecided manner, and appeared to be slipping from their shoulders. At those moments our position was by no means a pleasant one, for we ran imminent risk of rolling to the bottom of the ravine, and breaking our limbs against the enormous flint stones.

When we quitted these horrible paths, it was only to climb steep and very slippery hills, which were equally difficult in the ascent or descent. But in these circumstances there was not the same danger; and a fall could have had no farther ill consequence than that of retarding our progress. To obviate this inconvenience, however, two long ropes were attached to the palanquin, to which about a dozen persons were harnessed, who thus helped to draw it forward; and when it was necessary to descend, the ropes were placed in an opposite direction, in order to moderate the speed of the bearers.

This strange team was recruited all along the road in a manner somewhat tyrannical it must be owned,

but conformable to the customs of the country. When the attendants of the escort perceived any wood-cutters in the forests, or labourers in the fields, they ran to them, and summoned them, in the name of the law, to come and give their assistance for five *li*. It was curious to see the various stratagems put in practice in this chace, which to us was of so new a kind. When the fugitives found themselves circumvented by the knowing and skilful evolutions of the Mandarin's people, they often surrendered at discretion, and came laughing to submit to this unprofitable labour. We were at first distressed to see these poor villagers snatched thus from their necessary work, and compelled to give us gratuitously the use of their legs and arms; but we were obliged to leave all these things to be settled according to the custom of the country, for we were by no means called upon as we went along to reform the abuses that we might happen to meet with in the Celestial Empire.

By God's help we passed in safety through all the dangers of the road; but we arrived at Leang-chou-hien quite worn out with fatigue; for, though we had had much less physical suffering than our bearers, we had had more of the mental kind. Though we had not taken a hundred steps, our limbs were to the last degree weary. The constraint we had had to impose on ourselves, and the efforts we were obliged to make, to maintain perfect immobility in our palanquins, and avoid giving them the least shake, produced all the effect of a forced march. As soon as ever we reached the Communal Palace, therefore, we hastened to get a little rest, leaving Master Ting to say to the visitors that we were not at home.

Our Mandarins and the people of our escort, who probably were not so tired as we were, never left off making a most abominable noise with the guardians of the Palace. During the whole night we had the pleasure of hearing them quarrelling, though what about we could not exactly discover; all that appeared clear was, that it was a question of gain and loss, of trickery and fraud. By the time it was daylight again, our servant came to explain to us all the details of these very *Chinese* doings. Our conductors, it appeared, had, at the instigation of the new military Mandarin whom we had taken at Tchoung-king, attempted to make the tribunals of Leang-chan pay a more considerable sum for the expenses of our journey than they were really bound to furnish. In order to support their pretensions in the most effectual manner, they had even not shrunk from falsifying the orders signed by the viceroy; but, unfortunately for their little speculation, the Mandarins of Leang-chan had already been furnished with a copy, so that it was easy for them to ascertain the fraud. This was the origin of the interminable quarrels we had heard, and since the night was not, it appeared, long enough to settle them, the morning dawn found them still disputing with the same fury as before. Master Ting endeavoured to get us into the quarrel, and had represented us to the Mandarins of the place as most terrible fellows; but the affair did not concern us, and we took care not to meddle in it. We merely exhorted them to come to an agreement as well as they could, and as quickly as they could, for we certainly did not intend to set out in the hottest part of the day.

When at last they had exhausted all the tricks and

stratagems of Chinese polemics, peace was concluded; on what conditions we were not informed; but that did not matter to us. Towards eleven o'clock they came to inform us, with an air of triumph, that at last we were going to set off; but we replied it was too late, and we would not go till the next day. "We have certainly," we added, "no right to prevent you from quarrelling; but neither have you any right to make us the victims of your disputes, by forcing us to travel during the greatest heat." The people of our escort understood immediately that there was no help for it; and that we should not change our resolution; but it was not so with the Mandarins of Leang-chan, who could not make up their minds to it till after they had exhausted all the resources of Chinese diplomacy. The military commandant tried to seduce us with a jar of fine old wine, which he accompanied with most touching and fraternal exhortations. We tasted the wine, which we found delicious; but we declared our conviction that we could nowhere drink it in such good company as at Leang-chan.

As soon as it became known that we were not going to set off that day, the Communal Palace was invaded by a crowd of traders, who came to offer us the curiosities of the country. What we found most remarkable in these displays of Chinese merchandise were the blinds or awnings often used in these warm countries to fix over doors and windows. They are made of little sticks of bamboo, joined together with silk cord, and ornamented with paintings of flowers, birds, and fanciful patterns. The beautiful varnish that covers them heightens the brilliancy of the colours, and renders this light trellis-work extremely gay and

pretty. There are also in this town a great variety of odoriferous necklaces for sale.

The Christians are numerous enough at Leang-chan, and we were astonished that none of them had yet showed themselves. We could not help thinking that the Mandarins of the place had forbidden them to enter, in order to be a little revenged upon us for our refractoriness. As we were walking in the outer court, however, we noticed among the crowd at the door, a man who made the sign of the Cross; and we walked straight up to him, and invited him to follow us into the hall of reception. The long military Mandarin who had accompanied us from Tchoung-king, endeavoured to make us send him back; but he was entreated to moderate a zeal so untimely and so little to our taste. After having listened with the most lively interest to the details that this Christian entered into concerning the state of the mission, we begged him to give his brethren notice of the necessity of presenting themselves with a visiting note, and a dress of ceremony. We also went ourselves to give notice to the porter, and, the news being soon spread abroad among the Christians, our visitors shortly afterwards began to arrive in numerous detachments. How can we express the ineffable delight that these meetings afforded us? These men were all unknown to us, yet they were brothers and friends. We felt, as it were a Christian magnetism, a current of fraternity passing from them to us and from us to them. We loved without having ever seen each other, for we had one faith and one hope. We had so long been wanderers among indifferent or hostile people, that the sympathy by which we were now surrounded, even though it was a little Chinese

in its expression, expanded our hearts, and filled them with sweet emotions. It seemed while we were conversing with Christians, that we were but a little way from France. The Mandarins were quite surprised at these spontaneous intimacies, and the friendship which it seemed to them must be of long standing. They looked puzzled and uneasy, and it was evident they were obliged to exercise some self-command to restrain their ill-humour. An incident very unimportant in itself, a mere trifle, was near making their anger burst forth, and might have led to more serious consequences.

Just before nightfall, as we were repeating our breviary while walking in an avenue of the garden, and the three Mandarins of our escort were smoking their pipes under a large oleander and enjoying the delicious fragrance of the evening, our servant crossed the garden with a letter and a small packet and took the way towards our room. The military Mandarin whom we had taken at Tchoung-king immediately followed him, and though he had chosen his time well we did nevertheless perceive his move, and ran to our room to see what the audacious spy was doing. We caught him in *flagrante delicto* reading our letter and rummaging in the parcel addressed to us. As soon as he saw us he tried to bolt, keeping possession of the parcel; but we barred his passage, drove him back into the room, shut the door, and sprang upon him crying thieves! thieves! When he saw that we took hold of a rope as if to tie him, he cried out in his turn for help, and all the inmates of the palace in a moment came running to our room.

We had no inclination to do any thing more than laugh at the adventure; but in China it was neces-

sary to go into a violent passion, and accordingly we did so.

The packet, which was open, contained only some dried fruits and perfumed necklaces, which a Christian family had the kindness to offer us. The letter had nothing in it which could compromise them, and was as follows: —

"The humble family of the *Tchao* prostrate themselves to the earth before the Spiritual Fathers coming from the great kingdom of France, and beg them to call down the blessing of Heaven upon them. It is by the merciful will of God that they have obtained your precious presence in our poor and obscure country.

"Soon rivers and mountains will separate us, but the sentiments of the heart can traverse infinite spaces in a moment. Day and night we will think of our Spiritual Fathers.

"At Leang-chan all the friends of religion* unite to pray to the Lord of Heaven for them, and to beg him to grant them perpetual peace for their souls and bodies. We raise towards you some fruits of our country. Deign to lower your hands to receive them. This little offering is that of our hearts. These characters have been traced by the sinful men and women of the family of Tchao."

The zealous military Mandarin, confused at not having discovered any kind of plot, trembled in every limb at the expression of our pretended anger. The Prefect of the town arrived with his staff to restore peace, but he

* "*Kiao-you.*" The Chinese Christians call themselves by this name.

took such a wrong way to obtain it that he produced precisely the opposite result. He was stupid enough to tell us that he had ordered the head of the family of Tchao, as the original cause of the disturbance, to be imprisoned.

"A trial! a trial!" we exclaimed; "we must have a trial! If the head of the family of Tchao has committed any offence, let him be punished according to the laws for an example to the people. But if the head of that family is innocent, then it is the military Mandarin of Tchoung-king who is the guilty party, and he must be punished. The peace has been broken in the Communal Palace; we, who travel under the safe conduct of the Emperor, have been insulted by one of his officers; order must be restored, and every one be put in his proper place—good or bad, according to his conduct."

The Prefect of Leang-chan, who did not well understand what we would be at, tried to persuade us that the affair might be considered as terminated—that no more need be said about it—that the head of the family of Tchao was pardoned and about to be set at liberty, and that consequently "all the emotions of our souls might be tranquillised." But to all his exhortations and those of his colleagues we replied always in the same words, "A trial! a trial! If the head of the family of Tchao is innocent, he has no need of pardon; his conduct must be investigated; he has been ill-treated in the eyes of the world. Our honour and that of all Christians is concerned. There must be a public trial in order that the principles of justice and equity may be explained to the people with clearness and method. Those who know us," we added, turning to the Prefect, "know that we are not men of light words and unsteady

resolutions, and we here declare that we will not leave Leang-chan till there has been a public trial, at which we will be present. It is already late, but orders can be given directly to make the necessary preparations." Addressing ourselves afterwards to Master Ting, we told him, that as it was supper time we must sit down to table, and in order not to prolong the discussion, and to induce every one to go about his business, we made the Prefect a low bow, and retired to walk in a little solitary garden that was situated behind our own room.

Some few minutes afterwards all the curious people, whom the adventure of the dried fruits had attracted to the Communal Palace had disappeared, and it was announced to us that the warm wine was on the table. As we entered the room where the supper was served, we remarked that the Mandarin Tchoung-ting was at his post amongst the rest of our fellow commoners, and we made him a sign to go out, declaring that henceforth it would be impossible for us to take our meals in his company. He thought proper at first to affect to take this for a joke; but we soon made him understand that we were perfectly serious, and, by the persuasion of his colleagues, he at length withdrew, though with a very bad grace, and went to eat his rice elsewhere.

Our supper, as may be imagined, was not remarkably gay. The company helped themselves from the dishes right and left, but all in perfect silence; the chop-sticks seized and let fall often the same morsel before carrying it off. The guests swallowed, as if in mere absence of mind, several little glasses of warm wine; they glanced at each other out of the corners of their eyes, but said nothing. Every one seemed to be thinking of this grand trial. It occurred to us now and then that we had gone on

rather too boldly, and that if there had been at Leang-chan a Prefect of a little energy of character it would have been prudent to think of an honourable retreat. But fortunately we had to do with a fearful man, of a soft nature, whom we were very sure of being able to bend. It was of importance, therefore, to march on without hesitation, and we were also glad to profit by this opportunity to encourage and raise the spirits of the Christians, whom the disappointment of their hopes of religious liberty had greatly dejected.

As there was not much time wasted in conversation, we had soon arrived at the end of the repast, tea and pipes were brought, and then it was found necessary to relax a little from perfect dumbness, since, the occupation not being of so active a nature as dinner, there was no longer the same pretext for keeping silence. We therefore plunged immediately, and without preamble, into the business that was occupying every one's thoughts—that is to say, the proposed trial.

We were the first to speak. "We presume," said we, "that by this time everything is in readiness for the trial that is to take place this evening. Has the hour been fixed yet?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Master Ting; "every thing shall be arranged according to your desire. The Prefect has undertaken it, and he is renowned for his skill in discussing the most difficult points of law. All will be well, make yourself easy; you cannot, however, be present at the trial; the laws of the Empire are opposed to it. But that is no matter."

"On the contrary, it matters very much: mind, we warn you that if the trial takes place without our being present, it will count for nothing."

After a long and stormy discussion, we found ourselves no nearer the point at issue. The emissaries of the tribunal went and came incessantly, but without bringing us any solution of the problem. But as we had no wish to pass the night in parleying, we told Master Ting that he might undertake to negotiate on the following basis: — If at ten o'clock in the evening the trial had not commenced, we should go to bed, and then we should certainly remain the next day at Leang-chan; if the affair were not decided the next day, we should remain till the day after, and so on indefinitely, for we were firmly determined not to leave the place till after the trial.

Furnished thus with his instructions, Master Ting betook himself to the Tribunal. Ten o'clock arrived, and we went to bed and slept profoundly, though on the eve of a grand battle!

Towards midnight, we were awakened from our sleep to receive a deputation from the first magistrate, informing us that all was arranged, and in readiness for the trial, and that they were awaiting us at the Tribunal. The hour did not appear to us particularly convenient; but, considering that the Mandarins had had a good deal to get over on their side, we thought we could do no less than make some concessions on ours. We rose therefore immediately, and, after having put on the finest clothes we had, we repaired to the tribunal in a palanquin, and escorted by numerous attendants bearing in their hands torches of resinous wood.

We knew what a Chinese trial was. What we had undergone at Lha-ssa and Tching-tou-fou had served to make us acquainted with the form of procedure; and

we had traced out for ourselves, in accordance with these recollections, a nice little plan, which it was only necessary to carry out with steadiness.

We were introduced into the hall of audience, which was splendidly lit with large lanterns of variously coloured paper. A multitude of curious spectators, amongst whom were probably many Christians, thronged the lower end of the hall. The principal Mandarins of the town and our three conductors were seated at the upper part on a raised platform, where were several seats arranged before a long table. The judges gave us a most gracious reception, and the prefect begged us to be seated immediately, in order that they might commence proceedings. The question now arose, *where* were we to be seated? Nobody knew, and our presence appeared to create in the mind of the Prefect himself some serious doubts on the subject of his prerogatives. He certainly bore an Imperial dragon, richly embroidered in relief on the front of his violet silk tunic, but then we had a dragon on a beautiful red girdle: the prefect had a blue ball; but then we had a yellow cap!

After a few moments of hesitation we felt a sudden energetic inspiration to assume the direction of the affair ourselves, and, accordingly, we marched proudly up to the President's seat, and coolly motioned the others to the places they were to occupy, each according to his dignity. There was a movement of surprise, and even of hilarity among the Mandarins, but no opposition. They seemed so taken by surprise as to be completely put out, and mechanically assumed the places indicated.

The sitting was then commenced. We placed before us on the table the *corpus delicti*—that is to say, the

letter and the little parcel. After having read and commented on the letter, we passed it to the military Mandarin of Tchong-king, who was in the last place on the right hand, and asked him whether that was the letter he had opened. The reply was in the affirmative. We then passed on the parcel with the necklaces perfumed with cloves and sandal wood. Its identity having been also confirmed, we desired an officer of the court, who wore a cap of black felt in the form of a sugar-loaf and ornamented with long pheasant's plumes, to present the letter and the parcel to each of the judges, that they might all examine them.

These preliminaries being over, the order was given to introduce the accused, and bring him to the bar, and we soon saw advancing between four ill-looking attendants a Chinese of elegant deportment and most intelligent countenance. A chaplet, at the end of which shone a large bright copper cross, was passed round his neck. Immediately on seeing him, we began to feel great hopes of success; it would have been very disagreeable and embarrassing to us to have to do with a timid stupid man, incapable of giving us any support in the singular position in which we had placed ourselves; but we could not have met with a more suitable person. The head of the Tchao family appeared expressly cut out for our purpose.

As soon as he had arrived at the bottom of the platform, he cast a rapid glance round the court, but one that was sufficient to enable him to perceive that he was to be judged by one who was not a Mandarin of the Celestial Empire. He prostrated himself smiling, and, after having saluted the president by striking the earth three times with his forehead, he rose to salute

each judge with a low bow. When he had performed these salutations in the most graceful manner, he knelt down; for, according to the Chinese law, it is in this posture the accused have to appear before their judges. We begged him to rise, telling him we should be pained to see him on his knees before us, since that was not conformable to the customs of our country.

"Yes," said the Prefect, "stand upright, since you have been permitted to do so; and now," added he, "since the men from those distant countries will doubtless not understand your language, I will myself undertake your examination."

"No, no!" we said, "that cannot be; your fears are without foundation; you will see that we shall come to a very good understanding with this man."

"Yes," said the accused; "this language is for me, whiteness and clearness itself. I understand it without a moment's hesitation."

"Since that is the case," said the Prefect, a little disconcerted, "you must reply with simplicity and uprightness of heart to the questions that will be addressed to you."

We proceeded then to the examination in the following form:—

"What is your name?"

"This quite little person * is called by the vile and despicable name of *Tchao;* the name that I received in baptism is Simon."

"What is your age, and where do you come from?"

* The Chinese of the lower order always qualify themselves thus in the presence of Mandarins.

"For eight and thirty years I have endured the miseries of life in the poor country of Leang-chan."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I, sinner as I am, have obtained the grace of knowing and adoring the Lord of Heaven."

"Look at this letter. Do you know it? By whom was it written?"

"I do know it. It is this quite little person who traced these awkward characters with his unskilful pencil."

"Examine this packet. Do you recognise that?"

"I do recognise it."

"To whom did you address this letter and this parcel?"

"To the Spiritual Fathers of the great kingdom of France."

"What was your purpose in sending these things?"

"The humble Tchao family wished to express to the Spiritual Fathers the sentiments of their filial piety."

"How can that be? We do not know you, and you do not know us. We have never seen you."

"That is true; but those who are of the same religion are never strangers to one another; they make but one family, and when Christians meet, their hearts easily comprehend each other."

"You see," said we to the prefect, "that this man perfectly understands our language. He replies with the utmost clearness to all our questions; you know also now, that Christians only form one family; it is written in your books, and you yourselves often repeat, that all men are brothers,—that is to say, all men have the same origin; let them come from the North or the South, the East or the West, they have all proceeded from the

same father and mother; the root is one, the branches are innumerable. This is what we must understand when it is said that all men are brothers, and that signifies also that there is but one sovereign Lord, who has created and governs all things. He is the great father and mother of the ten-thousand nations who are on the face of the earth. The Christians alone adore this Sovereign Lord, this great Father and Mother, and that is why they are said to form among themselves but one family. Those who are not Christians belong also by their origin to the same family; but they live apart, and forget the principles of paternal authority and filial piety."

"All that is founded in reason," said the Chinese judges. "Here is the true doctrine in all its purity."

After this short theological discussion, we returned to the trial.

"We ourselves," said we, addressing the accused, "are strangers, not born in the Central Empire, but we have lived in it long enough to become acquainted with the greater part of your laws. It may be, nevertheless, that some have escaped us. Answer, therefore, according to your conscience."

"In sending us this letter, and the packet of dried fruit, did you think that you were acting contrary to the laws?"

"I did not think so. On the contrary, I believed that I had done a good action, and that is what our laws do not forbid."

"As you are a man of the people, you may be mistaken in this, and not understand aright the laws of the Empire."

Addressing ourselves then to the magistrates, who

were seated near us, we asked them whether this man had committed a reprehensible action? All replied unanimously that his conduct was worthy of praise. "And you," we said to the Mandarin of Tchoung-king, named Lu, "what is your opinion?"

"There can be no doubt that the action of the Tchao family was virtuous and holy. Who would be absurd enough to say the contrary, and maintain that it was reprehensible."

"The matter has now been made clear," said we to the accused; "the truth has been carefully separated from error. According to the testimony both of the superior and inferior Mandarins, you had a right to obey the dictates of your heart, and make the offering to us. In that case we accept it here openly, and in presence of every one; and we will preserve your letter with care as one of our most precious possessions."

The trial was now over, and we might immediately have pronounced a verdict of "not guilty," and sent home the accused in triumph; but as we had taken a fancy to playing the part of Mandarin, we prolonged the sitting a little. We requested the honourable Tchao to give us some information concerning the Christian community of Leang-chan, and in language that was full of spirit, though decorous, he entered into a number of details that were most interesting to us, though probably not quite as much so to the *other judges*. At length we ventured to ask this question,—"Are the Christians of Leang-chan faithful observers of the laws? Do they set a good example to the people?"

"We Christians," said Tchao, "are miserable sinners, like other men, but we do endeavour to act virtuously."

"Do so," said we; "exert yourselves to become virtuous, to make your conduct conformable to the purity

and holiness of the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, and you will see that the Mandarins and the people throughout the Empire will at last do you justice. Already the Emperor has issued an edict declaring that the object of the Christian religion is to train men to the practice of what is good, and the avoidance of what is bad, and he has consequently forbidden either the great or the small tribunals of the eighteen provinces to persecute the Christians. This edict has not yet been promulgated in all localities, but its existence is authentic; you may announce it to all the friends of religion: you are permitted to say your prayers and observe all Christian ordinances without any fear, and in perfect liberty. Who would be audacious enough, by troubling you, to incur the anger of the Emperor?"

After this little speech, we asked the prefect if we might send back the head of the Tchao family to his home. "Since it is manifest," said we, "that his conduct has been in all respects virtuous, he ought now to be allowed to go and carry the consolation of his presence to his relations and friends."

The meeting was just about to disperse, but we extended our arms, and begged permission to express one more thought. "Since" said we, "the action of the Tchao family has been conformable to the laws and irreproachable, it is evident that the conduct of the Mandarin Lu has been culpable; he introduced himself secretly into our apartment, and has covered his face with shame, by opening a letter that was addressed to us.

"The Mandarin Lu was appointed to be our military escort from the town of Tchoung-king to the frontiers of the province; but, as you see clearly that he has

not received a good education, and his ignorance of the rites may lead him into still greater faults we here declare that we will have nothing more to do with him: our declaration shall be made in writing, and sent to the superior authorities of Tchoung-king." At these words we rose, and the sitting was over. Our admirable Christian came to us, threw himself on his knees, and asked our blessing. He also received the congratulations of the Mandarins, who had been present at these curious proceedings, and he well deserved them. It seemed to us that by his dignified deportment, and the courageous propriety of his language, he had done honour to the name of Christian in the eyes of his countrymen. We felt, nevertheless, some anxiety, concerning his future prospects, and the joy of our little triumph was somewhat abated by feelings of distrust. We feared that, after our departure, the Tribunal of Leang-chan, might seek to take its revenge on the Christians. We recommended to Simon Tchao therefore the utmost prudence, in order to afford no pretext to the malevolence of the Mandarins, and we begged him to send us word how he was going on. A year afterwards we received at Macao a letter from Leang-chan, informing us that since our departure the Christians had enjoyed the most profound tranquillity, and no one had ventured to persecute the worshippers of the Lord of Heaven.

It was almost morning by the time we returned to the Communal Palace, but we went to bed, — not indeed to sleep — that would have been difficult, — but to rest ourselves a little, recover our composure, and prepare to set out in a few hours. We had need of some interval of rest, that our thoughts might return into their wonted

channel, from which they had been so suddenly driven. We had hardly quitted the Tribunal, before all that had passed appeared like a dream. We could hardly conceive how the Mandarins and the people could have been in earnest in this extraordinary trial: the part of president of the court, played *impromptu* by a French missionary in a Chinese town, in the presence of Chinese magistrates, and that without any opposition, as if it had been the most natural thing in the world! Two strangers, two barbarians, to be allowed to master for a moment all the rooted prejudices of a people, jealous and disdainful of strangers to excess, and that even to the point of arrogating to themselves the authority of a judge, and exercising it officially! How could this be possible?

These facts prove, however, how much the principle of authority is usually respected by the Chinese people. Our red girdles had been our most powerful spell; they were influenced by them, without being very well aware of it, as by an emanation of the Imperial power.

The fear of compromising themselves is also a sentiment universal among the Chinese, and which one may easily turn to account. Every one thinks first of providing for his own safety, and then letting things take their course. Prudence, or perhaps it may be called pusillanimity, is one of the most remarkable qualities of the Chinese; and they have an expression, which they make use of on all occasions, which very well characterises this sentiment. In the midst of all difficulties and embarrassments, the Chinese say *siao-sin*, that is to say, "Lessen" or "draw in your heart." Those who are fond of comparing the characters of various nations, as they manifest themselves in their

languages, might find a curious contrast in this respect between the French and the Chinese. At the approach of danger, while the latter says, trembling, "Draw in your heart," the former starts up, crying "*Prends garde.*" He makes use of an expression that could only suit a warlike race, who, in presence of an enemy, instinctively lay the hand on the sword.

On our departure from Leang-chan, we were honoured with a magnificent ovation. The news of this strange nocturnal sitting of the first Tribunal, under the presidency of a "Devil of the West," had spread abroad, enriched, of course, by the imaginations of the narrators, with a number of most wonderful circumstances. As soon, therefore, as the sun appeared above the horizon, all the inhabitants of the town began to hurry eagerly to the spot that we should have to pass. All the Mandarins, in their robes of state, were assembled at the Communal Palace to bid us farewell, and to overwhelm us with the most extravagant compliments. They accompanied us into the street, and would not go back till they had seen their unlooked for colleagues of the preceding night properly installed in their palanquins. All the way we went along, the crowd was immense, and animated by the most noisy and feverish eagerness to catch a glimpse of us — or, at least, of our yellow caps. Here and there were assembled groups of Christians, who, we saw with pleasure, were assuming a tolerably courageous deportment. All wore their chaplets round their necks, and when we came up to them, threw themselves on their knees, and begged our blessing in chorus, making, as they did so, a bold sign of the cross. We did not perceive that this religious act excited among the Pagans the least inclination to hostility or

mockery. They kept a respectful silence, or contented themselves with saying, "Here are Christians who are asking the masters of their religion to call down felicity from Heaven upon them."

In the last street, before we left the town, we saw a long line of women, who appeared also to be waiting the passing of the men with yellow caps and red girdles. When our palanquins came opposite them, after having tottered a few seconds on their little lame feet, they ended by kneeling down, and making also the sign of the cross. They were Christian women of Leang-chan, who, under these circumstances, had judged it proper not to "draw in their hearts," but to shake off, at least for once, the hard yoke of servitude which Chinese prejudice imposes on their sex. The people of our escort seemed rather surprised at such an audacious demonstration, but we did not hear any improper remark. One of them cried, on seeing the women kneel down, "Well, there are Christian *men*, that I have known a long time, but I never knew before there were Christian *women;*" to which his comrade responded, "Nobody ever thought you knew much about any thing."

At length we got out of Leang-chan a town of the third order, which will always hold a place in the numerous recollections of our long peregrinations. We forgot to say that when we left the Communal Palace, we found that the Mandarin of Tchoung-king was no longer among the number of our conductors. After dismissing him at the close of our judicial sitting, we never saw him again, and no one ever spoke to us of him; only at the moment of our departure, the prefect informed us that Lu had been replaced by a young military Mandarin, whom he presented to us, and who,

far from exposing himself to be brought to trial, always behaved in a very amiable and prepossessing manner. The above-mentioned conduct of the Christian women of Leang-chan, was one of the things that struck us most during our journey through the province of Sse-tchouen. That women should collect in the street to see two persons pass, who were reputed curious and extraordinary, who, though said to be born in Europe, had traversed Tartary, Thibet, and China, there was nothing in that but what was quite natural. If these women were Christians, it was natural enough that they should kneel down, and cross themselves, and ask a blessing of a minister of their religion. All this would be simple enough in Europe, but in China it was something prodigious; it was a defiance to all custom, a running counter to the most established ideas and principles. Such prejudices arise from the lamentable state of oppression and slavery, to which women have always been reduced, among nations whose sentiments have not been ennobled and purified by Christianity.

The condition of the Chinese woman is most pitiable; suffering, privation, contempt, all kinds of misery and degradation, seize on her in the cradle, and accompany her pitilessly to the tomb. Her very birth is commonly regarded as a humiliation and a disgrace to the family—an evident sign of the malediction of Heaven. If she be not immediately suffocated (according to an atrocious custom which we shall speak of by and by), she is regarded and treated as a creature radically despicable, and scarcely belonging to the human race.

This appears so incontestable a fact, that *Pan-houi-pan*, celebrated, though a woman, among Chinese writers, endeavours, in her works, to humiliate her own sex, by

reminding them continually of the inferior rank they occupy in the creation. "When a son is born," she says, "he sleeps upon a bed; he is clothed with robes, and plays with pearls; every one obeys his princely cries. But when a girl is born, she sleeps upon the ground, is merely wrapped up in a cloth, plays with a tile, and is incapable of acting either virtuously or viciously. She has nothing to think of but preparing food, making wine, and not vexing her parents."

In ancient times, instead of rejoicing when a child was born — if it happened to be of the inferior sex — they left it for three whole days on a heap of rags on the ground, and the family did not manifest the slightest interest in so insignificant an event. When this time had expired, they performed carelessly some trivial ceremony, strikingly contrasting with the solemn rejoicings that took place on the birth of a male child. Pan-houi-pan refers to this ancient custom, and vaunts its propriety and wisdom, serving so well to prepare woman for the proper feeling of her inferiority.

This public and private servitude of women — a servitude that opinion, legislation, manners, have sealed with their triple seal — has become, in some measure, the corner-stone of Chinese society. The young girl lives shut up in the house where she was born, occupied exclusively with the cares of housekeeping, treated by every body, and especially by her brothers, as a menial, from whom they have a right to demand the lowest and most painful services. The amusements and pleasures of her age are quite unknown to her; her whole education consists in knowing how to use her needle; she neither learns to read nor to write; there exists for her neither school nor house of education; she is con-

demned to vegetate in the most complete and absolute ignorance, and no one ever thinks of, or troubles himself about her, till the time arrives when she is to be married. Nay the idea of her nullity is carried so far, that even in this, the most important and decisive event in the life of a woman, she passes for nothing; the consulting her in any way, or informing her of so much as of the name of her husband, would be considered as most superfluous and absurd.

The young girl is simply an object of traffic, an article of merchandise to be sold to the highest bidder, without her having the right to ask a single question concerning the merit or quality of her purchaser. On the day of the wedding there is great anxiety to adorn and beautify her. She is clad in splendid robes of silk, glittering with gold and jewels; her beautiful plaits of raven hair are ornamented with flowers and precious stones; she is carried away in great pomp, and musicians surround the brilliant palanquin, where she sits in state like a queen on her throne. You think, perhaps, on witnessing all this grandeur and rejoicing, that now, at last, her period of happiness is about to begin. But, alas! a young married woman is but a victim adorned for the sacrifice. She is quitting a home where, however neglected, she was in the society of the relations to whom she had been accustomed from her infancy. She is now thrown, young, feeble, and inexperienced, among total strangers, to suffer privation and contempt, and be altogether at the mercy of her purchaser. In her new family, she is expected to obey every one without exception. According to the expression of an old Chinese writer, "the newly-married wife should be but a shadow and an echo in the house."

She has no right to take her meals with her husband; nay, not even with his male children: her duty is to serve them at table, to stand by in silence, help them to drink, and fill and light their pipes. She must eat alone, after they have done, and in a corner; her food is scanty and coarse, and she would not dare to touch even what is left by her own sons.

It may be thought, perhaps, that this does not agree very well with the much-talked-of principle of filial piety; but it must not be forgotten that in China a woman counts for nothing. The law ignores her existence, or notices her merely to load her with fetters, to complete her servitude, and confirm her legal incapacity. Her husband, or rather her lord and master, can strike her with impunity, starve her, sell her, or, what is worse, let her out for a longer or shorter period, as is a common practice in the province of Tche-kiang.

Polygamy, which is allowable in China, aggravates the sufferings of the married woman. When she is no longer young, when she has no children, or none of the male sex, her husband takes a second wife, of whom she becomes in some measure the servant. The household is then the seat of continual war, full of jealousies, animosities, quarrels, and not unfrequently of battles. When they are alone, they have at least the liberty of weeping in secret over the cureless sorrows of their destiny.

The state of perpetual humiliation and wretchedness to which the women of China are reduced does sometimes drive them to frightful extremities; and the judicial annals are full of the most tragical events arising from this cause. The number of women who hang themselves, or commit suicide in various ways, is

very considerable. When this catastrophe occurs in a family, the husband shows usually a great deal of emotion, for, in fact, he has suffered a considerable loss, and will be under the necessity of buying another wife.

The hard condition of the poor Chinese women is, as will be supposed, considerably ameliorated in the Christian families. As it is remarked by Monseigneur Gerbet, "Christianity, which strikes at the very root of slavery, by its doctrine of the divine fraternity of all men, combats in a special manner the slavery of women, by its dogma of the divine maternity of Mary. How should the daughters of Eve remain slaves from the fallen Adam, since the restored Eve, the new mother of all living, has become the Queen of Angels. When we enter those chapels of the Virgin to which devotion has given a special celebrity, we remark with pious interest the *ex voto* suspended there by the hand of a mother whose child has been cured — of a sailor saved from shipwreck by the patroness of mariners. But the eyes of reason and history see in the worship of Mary an ideal temple which Catholicism has constructed for all times and for all ages; an *ex voto* of a higher social and universal signification. Man had pressed with a brutal sceptre on the head of his companion for forty centuries; but he laid it down on the day when he knelt before the altar of Mary—he laid it down with gratitude; for the oppression of his wife had been his own degradation, and he was delivered then from his own tyranny."— (Monseigneur Gerbet, *Keepsake Religieuse.*)

The recovery of women in China from this abject state is going on slowly, it is true, but in a most striking and effectual manner. In the first place, it need hardly be said that the little girl born in a Chris-

tian family is not murdered, as is often the case among the Pagans. Religion is there to watch over her at her birth, to take her lovingly in its arms, and say, Here is a child created in the image of God, and predestined, like you, to immortality. Thank the Heavenly Father for having given her to you; and implore the Queen of Angels to be her patroness.

The young Christian girl is not permitted to stagnate in ignorance; she does not vegetate, forsaken by every one, in a corner of the paternal mansion; for since she must learn her prayers and study the Christian doctrine, it is necessary to renounce in her favour the most inveterate prejudices of her nation. Schools must be founded for her, where she may be enabled to develope her intellects, to learn in the books of her religion those mysterious characters which are for other Chinese women an inexplicable enigma. She will be in the society of numerous companions of her own age; and at the same time that her mind is becoming enlarged and her heart formed to virtue, she will learn in some measure in what consists the life of this world.

It is more especially by marriage contracted in the Christian form that the Chinese woman shakes off the frightful servitude of Pagan customs, and enters on the rights and privileges of the great family of humanity. Although the power of prejudice and habit may not even yet always permit her to manifest her inclinations openly, and choose for herself him who is destined in this life to partake her joys and her sorrows, her wishes do nevertheless count for something; and we have ourselves, more than once, known instances of young girls who, by their energetic resistance, have induced their parents to break off engagements entered into

without their participation. Such a fact would be regarded as absurd and impossible among the Pagans. The Christian women also always possess in their families the influence and the prerogatives of wives and mothers; and it may be observed that they enjoy greater liberty out of doors. The practice of assembling on Sundays and festival days at chapels and oratories to pray in common, and be present at the divine offices, creates and maintains relations of intimacy among them. They go out oftener to visit each other, and form from time to time those little social parties which are so useful in dissipating care and vexation, and in helping one to support the burden of life. Pagan women know nothing of these comforts and consolations; they are almost always secluded, and nobody cares if they wear out their souls in languor and ennui. Master Ting, in speaking with us concerning the Leang-chan demonstration, mentioned it as such an enormity, that it is evident what is the value of women in the estimation of the Chinese.

"As we were leaving Leang-chan," said he, "when we passed through that street where there were so many women assembled, I heard it said that they were Christians. Is'nt that nonsense?"

"No, certainly; it was the truth. They were Christians."

Master Ting looked stupefied with astonishment, and his arms fell down by his side. "I don't understand that," said he. "I have heard you say that people become Christians to save their souls. Is that it?"

"Yes; that is the object we propose to ourselves."

"Then what can the women become Christians for?"

"What for? To save their souls, like the men."

"But they have no souls," said Master Ting, stepping back a pace, and folding his arms; "women have no souls. You can't make Christians of them."

We endeavoured to remove the scruples of the worthy man upon this point, and to give him some few sounder ideas on the subject of women's souls; but we are by no means sure we succeeded. The very notion tickled his fancy so much, that he laughed with all his might. "Nevertheless," he said, after having listened to our dissertation, "I will be sure to recollect what you have been telling me, and, when I get home again to my family, I will tell my wife that she has got a soul. She will be a little astonished I think."

The Chinese Christian women feel deeply how much they owe to a religion that is releasing them from the hard bondage in which they have hitherto groaned, and which, whilst guiding them on the way to eternal life, procures for them even in this world joys and consolations that seem made expressly for them. They show themselves grateful too; they are full of fervour and zeal; and one may say that the progress that has been made in the propagation of the faith in the Celestial Empire is principally owing to them. They maintain the regularity and exactness of the prayers in the Christian communities; they may be seen braving the prejudices of public opinion, and practising with much self-devotion works of Christian charity, even towards the Pagans, taking care of the sick, collecting and adopting the children abandoned by their mothers. It is they who in times of persecution confess the faith in presence of the Mandarins, with most courage and perseverance. In general, indeed, the zeal of women in

the cause of religion has been remarked in all ages and countries.

"History informs us, that whenever the Gospel has been preached in any country, women have always shown a particular interest in the Word of Life, and habitually preceded men in their divine eagerness to receive and propagate it. One would say that the response of Mary to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," finds a stronger echo in their souls. This was prefigured in the very commencement of Christianity in the persons of the holy friends of the Virgin, who, having run before even the well-beloved disciple to the tomb of the Saviour, were the first to become acquainted with the fact of the resurrection, and to announce it to the Apostles. Women have always held a high rank in the preaching of the Gospel.

At the commencement of all great religious epochs, a mysterious celestial form—the form of a saint—is seen heralding its progress. When Christianity issued from the catacombs, Helena, the mother of Constantine, presented to the ancient Roman world the recovered cross, which Clotilda soon erected over the Frank cradle of modern society. The Church owes in part the greatest triumphs of St. Jerome to the hospitality offered to him by Saint Paula in her peaceful retreat at Palestine, where she instituted an academy for Roman Christian ladies. Monica, by her prayers, brought forth the true Augustine. In the middle ages, Saint Hildegarda, Saint Catherine of Sienna, Saint Theresa, preserved much better than the greater part of the learned doctors of their time the tradition of a mystic philosophy — so good, so vivifying to the heart, the spring to which, in our own age, more than one soul, dried and withered by doubt, has come to

bathe and refresh itself, and seek to return to truth by the way of love."—(Monseigneur Gerbet, *Keepsake Religieuse.*)

After the triumphal night at Leang-chan, we had a magnificent journey by a fine road across an enchanting country. The rays of the sun, indeed, were somewhat too powerful, but we were beginning to get accustomed to this high temperature, as we had got accustomed to the frost and snow of Tartary.

Towards the end of the day we stopped at a certain place named *Yao-tchang*. This town, though rather a considerable one, was not surrounded by ramparts. No Mandarin appeared to have a fixed residence there; there was no Communal Palace, and consequently we were obliged to look out for the best lodging we could find. At first we made the experiment at an old inn, called on its sign the Hotel of the Beatitudes, and the chief of this establishment conducted us with great ceremony to what he called his chamber of honour. It was situated immediately over the kitchen, and it is very possible that it was for various reasons a very honourable apartment. But experienced travellers must not think only of vain glory, and it appeared to us that this chamber of honour, to which air and light only entered by a narrow skylight, was not altogether an eligible abode for us. In fact it was, to speak plainly, an abominable den, haunted by legions of mosquitoes, which on our entrance issued forth full of wrath from every corner, and began to whirl and buzz around us, and declare implacable war. There exhaled also from this gloomy hole such a noisome vapour of mouldy fusty antiquity, that the very idea of passing the night there made one sick. We were assured, nevertheless, that

this was the best hotel at Yao-tchang, and it is by no means impossible, judging from the general aspect of the locality, that it might be so. Whether we liked it or not, therefore, it seemed we should have to put up with it; and we were making our preparations to manage as well as we could, when the smoke from the kitchen chimney, after having climbed slowly up the steps of the black narrow staircase, began to invade our chamber of honour in such quantities that it was not possible to remain there any longer. The acrid nature of the smoke pained our eyes, so that we descended weeping to the kitchen, in search of Master Ting, whom we found stuffed into a corner, intoxicating himself with opium. As soon as he saw us he raised his head a little from his bamboo pillow, and asked whether we were comfortable up stairs. "Not very; we are suffocated by foul air, blinded by smoke, and devoured by mosquitoes."

"Those three things are very bad," responded Master Ting, laying down his pipe, and exerting himself so far as to raise himself into a sitting posture; "but what is to be done?—there is no Communal Palace in this place, and the other inns are worse than this. The case is very difficult."

"No, not very difficult; what we want is a little cool fresh air. We will go into the country, and take up our lodging under a tree. We were accustomed to sleep thus in the open air for a long time."

"Yes; it is said that this custom exists among the Monguls, in the Land of Grass, but here, in the Central Kingdom, it is not received. Men of quality cannot pass the night in the fields with birds and insects; the rites are opposed to it. But wait a moment; I think I know a good place; I will go and see about it:" and

thereupon our dear Mandarin rose up, put out his little smoking lamp, took his fan and went out.

We waited for his return at the door of the inn, and a short time afterwards we saw him coming back, taking as long strides as he possibly could, and addressing to us from a distance, with his two arms, some telegraphic signs, which, on account of their multiplicity and their extreme complication, we could not understand. We were inclined to think, nevertheless, that Master Ting had made a discovery. As soon as he was near enough to make us hear, he cried, in his sharp nasal tones, "Let us move directly; we can go and lodge at the theatre: it's an excellent place for seeing and breathing!"

Without asking for any more explanation, we went back into the house. A porter appeared, who took up our baggage, and, in the twinkling of an eye, we had left the Hotel of Beatitudes to become tenants of the theatre of Yao-tchang. This theatre formed part of a great Bonze Convent, and was situated in an immense court-yard opposite to the principal pagoda. Its construction was rather remarkable, in comparison with the numerous edifices of this kind to be met with in China. Twelve great granite columns supported a vast square platform surmounted by a pavilion richly ornamented, and supported on pillars of varnished wood.

A broad stone staircase, situated at the back of the building, led to the platform, first into an apartment intended for the actors, and thence to the stage by two side doors, which served for entrances and exits. Upon the stage were placed some chairs and a table, and there we supped by the light of the moon and stars, as well as of a number of lanterns, which the directors of the theatre had had kindled in our honour; it was really a

charming spectacle, and one altogether unlooked for. If we had not taken the precaution to have the great gate of the Bonze Convent shut, we should soon have had the whole population of Yao-tchang in the space that was intended to serve for a pit. It is certain that the inhabitants of this place had never seen on their stage anything they would think as curious as ourselves. We heard a tumultuous mob outside, demanding with loud cries to be allowed a sight of the two men from the Western seas at supper. They seemed to think we must have some quite peculiar and extraordinary method of eating. Some succeeded in getting upon the roof of the Bonze Convent, and some had climbed over the enclosure and up into some high trees, whence they could command a view of us, and where we saw them jumping about among the leaves like large monkies. These curious and intrepid persons must have been much disappointed to see us eating our rice with chop sticks, quite in the established Chinese fashion.

The evening was delightfully fine, and the air delicious on this platform, where we begged our servant to place our beds, as we desired to pass the night there. All was made ready, and we wished to go to bed; but our watchful observers manifested no inclination to quit their posts, and at last we had to put out the lanterns, in order to drive them home. As they departed, we heard some of them say, "Why, these men are just like us!" "Not quite," said another; "the little devil has very large eyes, and the tall one a very pointed nose. I noticed that difference."

At break of day, Master Ting arrived, presented himself on the stage, and was so obliging as to set about waking us, by giving a roll on an enormous

drum which stood in a corner, and, doubtless, served for the orchestra, when there was a performance.

After having thus exhibited his talents as a drummer, he bethought himself to give us, also, a specimen of his dramatic capabilities. He, therefore, placed himself in the middle of the stage, threw himself into a theatrical attitude, sang a song with much gesticulation, and then undertook, *solus*, a very animated dialogue, changing his voice and his place, when the turn of the supposed interlocutor came. When the dialogue was finished, he was not tired, but favoured us, also, with a taste of his quality as a tumbler. "Now," said he, "do you pay attention, I am going to show you some tricks of agility;" and in a moment, there he was, leaping, gambolling, pirouetting, and tumbling head over heels. But, just as he was at the height of his performance, a door of the Bonze Convent was heard to open, and he immediately stopped short, and rushed off into the slips, saying it would never do to allow the people to see a Mandarin mimicking the play-actors.

We profited by his absence to get up, and very soon all the people of our escort, who the preceding night had been obliged to disperse and seek a lodging, were assembled at the gates. The palanquin bearers and porters arrived shortly after, and all was made ready for our departure.

Yao-tchang is built on the banks of the Blue River, whose tranquil and majestic course we could perceive from the top of the Bonze Convent; and, although we had more than once protested against travelling by water, we thought we would make one more experiment, and see whether we could not manage to make it more agreeable than it had been the first time.

In a very long journey, some change in the mode of travelling is always desirable, as the uniformity becomes at last excessively wearisome: the palanquin has, doubtless, its advantages, which are not to be despised; but to be for a long time together shut up every day in a cage, and balanced upon the shoulders of four unfortunate fellows, whom you see, panting, and perspiring with heat and fatigue,—one does, sometimes, get rather tired of that.

We proposed, therefore, to our conductors to make a stage by water; the proposal was received with enthusiasm, and, for fear we should change our minds, every body made as much haste as possible in preparing for the embarcation: as they knew that we had a horror of dawdling, they displayed a really marvellous activity. According to our recommendation, two boats were hired, one for ourselves and the Mandarins, the other for the soldiers, attendants, and palanquin bearers; and as soon as ever we came on board, they weighed anchor, and we set off, the beauty of the weather and the calmness of the water affording us hopes of a pleasant journey. The cabin we occupied was spacious, and pretty well ventilated; and if not absolutely clean, was at least *tolerably* dirty.

We had not yet had time to offer Master Ting our compliments on the brilliant theatrical abilities he had developed, and we now expressed to him the happiness we felt in admiring in him a talent that we had not expected. Our little dose of flattery had a magical effect. After having replied, with due modesty, that he had no talent of the sort, he immediately proposed to go through a little dramatic piece in the cabin, with the assistance of the two military Mandarins, who also

volunteered to take a part. There was no need of any long preparation; the proposal was scarcely made before the two functionaries had begun their comedy, if one may give that name to a buffoonish dialogue, seasoned with grimace and contortion.

Their *repertoire* appeared inexhaustible, and, now they had once begun, we had great difficulty in inducing them to resume a language and manners more in accordance with their official dignity. To say the truth, however, our Mandarins really only wanted a little more practice, and a rather better memory, to make excellent actors. There is, perhaps, not a people in the world who carry so far their taste and passion for theatrical entertainments as the Chinese. We said just now that they were a nation of cooks, and we might also assert, with truth, that they are a nation of actors. These men have minds and bodies endowed with so much suppleness and elasticity, that they can transform themselves at will, and express by turns the most opposite passions. There is, in fact, a good deal of the monkey in their nature, and, when one has lived some time among them, one cannot but wonder how people in Europe could ever take it into their heads that China was a kind of vast academy, peopled with sages and philosophers. Their gravity and their wisdom, exclusive of some official proceedings, are scarcely found out of their classical books. The Celestial Empire has much more resemblance to an immense fair, where, amidst a perpetual flux and reflux of buyers and sellers, of brokers, loungers, and thieves, you see in all quarters stages and mountebanks, jokers and comedians, labouring uninterruptedly to amuse the public. Over the whole surface of the country, in the eighteen pro-

vinces, in the towns of the first, second and third order, in the burghs and the villages, rich and poor, Mandarins and people, all the Chinese, without exception, are passionately addicted to dramatic representations. There are theatres every where; the great towns are full of them, and the actors play night and day. There is no little village that has not its theatre, which is usually placed opposite to the pagoda, and sometimes even forms a part of it. In some circumstances the permanent theatres are not found sufficient, and then the Chinese construct temporary ones, with wonderful facility, out of bamboo. The Chinese theatre is always extremely simple, and its arrangements are such as to exclude all idea of scenic illusion. The decorations are fixed, and do not change as long as the piece lasts. One would never know what they were intended for, if the actors themselves did not take care to inform the public, and correct the motionless character of the scenes by verbal explanations. The only arrangement that is ever made with a view to scenic effect is the introduction of a kind of trap-door in the front of the stage, that serves for the entrances and exits of supernatural personages, and goes by the name of the "Gate of Demons."

The collections of Chinese dramatic pieces are very extensive; the richest is that of the Mongol dynasty, called the *yuen*, and it is from this repertory that various pieces, translated by learned Europeans, have been taken. With respect to their literary merit, we may quote the judgment pronounced on them by M. Edouard Biot. "The plot of all these pieces," says that learned Chinese scholar, "is very simple; the actors themselves announce the person they represent; there is seldom any

connection between the scenes, and very often the most burlesque details are mingled with the gravest subjects.*

"In general, it does not appear that these pieces deserve to be rated above our old booth plays; and we may believe that the dramatic art in China is still in its infancy, if we can trust the accounts of travellers who have been present at theatrical performances at Canton, and even at Pekin.

"It may be that its imperfect state depends in a great measure on the degraded condition of the Chinese actors, who are mere servants, hired for wages by a speculator, and who have to please an ignorant mob, in order to earn their wretched subsistence. But, if we find little intrinsic merit in the Chinese *chefs-d'œuvres* which have been presented to European readers, they cannot but be curious, regarded as studies of manners; and, in this point of view, we sincerely thank the learned men who have introduced them to us."

The companies of Chinese actors are not attached to any theatre in particular; they are all of the itinerant class, going wherever they are wanted, and travelling with an enormous apparatus of costumes and decorations. The appearance of these caravans is very peculiar, and recalls the picturesque descriptions of our gangs of gipsies. You often meet with them on the rivers, which they travel on by preference, for reasons of economy.

These wandering bands are usually hired for a certain number of days; sometimes by Mandarins or rich

* It might have been added that Chinese dramas are full of very equivocal jokes, and often of revolting obscenity.

private persons, but more frequently by associations formed in the various quarters of towns and in villages.

There is always some pretext for getting up a play—the promotion of a Mandarin, a good harvest, a lucrative speculation, a danger to be averted, the cessation of a drought, or of rain, every event, whether fortunate or unfortunate, must always be celebrated by a theatrical performance. The heads of the district assemble, and decree that there shall be a play, lasting so many days, and then everybody has to contribute to the expenses in proportion to his means. Sometimes this is done by one person, who wishes to offer a treat to his fellow citizens, or to obtain for himself the character of being a generous man.

In commercial transactions of importance there is often a stipulation that, over and above the price, there shall be a certain number of dramatic entertainments given by one or other party. Sometimes disputes arise concerning this article of the treaty, and he who is declared by the arbiters to have been in the wrong, has to pay one or two representations by way of fine.

The lower classes of the people are always admitted gratuitously to the theatre, and they never fail to profit by the permission. Some theatre or other is always to be found open at every hour of the day or night in the great towns. The villages are not so favoured, and as they have but few subscribers, they can only afford to have the actors at certain periods of the year. If they hear, however, that there is a play to be performed anywhere in their neighbourhood, the villagers will often, after all the toil of the day, walk five or six miles to see it.

The spectators are always in the open air, and the

place assigned to them has no precise limit. Every one chooses the best post he can find, in the street, upon the roof of a house, or up a tree, so that the clamour and confusion prevailing in these assemblies may easily be imagined. The whole audience eats, drinks, smokes, and talks as much as it pleases. The small dealers in provisions move about incessantly among the crowd; and whilst the actors are exerting all their talents to revive before the public some great national or tragic event, these merchants are howling themselves hoarse to announce the bits of sugar-cane, sweet fried potatoes, and other dainties contained in their ambulatory shops.

It is not the custom at theatres in China to applaud or hiss. Women are forbidden to appear on the stage, and their parts are played by young men, who imitate so well the feminine voice and dress, that the resemblance is perfect. Custom does, however, permit the women to dance on the rope, or perform equestrian feats; and they show, especially in the northern provinces, prodigious skill in these exercises. One can hardly conceive how, with their little feet, they can dance on a tight rope, stand firmly on horseback, and perform many other difficult feats.

As we have before had occasion to remark, the Chinese succeed wonderfully well in all that depends on address and agility. Jugglers are very numerous, and the skill of many of them would astonish our most celebrated sleight-of-hand practitioners.

Our voyage on the Blue River was rapid and extremely pleasant. We arrived at *Fou-ki-hien* in the afternoon, having gone 150 *li*, or about 45 miles, in four hours and a half

CHAP. VII.

TEMPLE OF LITERARY COMPOSITION. — QUARREL WITH A DOCTOR. — A CITIZEN IN THE CANGUE — HIS DELIVERANCE. — VISIT TO THE TRIBUNAL OF OU-CHAN. — THE PREFECT AND MILITARY COMMANDANT OF OU-CHAN. — MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE OF THE CHINESE. — INSPECTION OF DEAD BODIES. — FREQUENT SUICIDES IN CHINA. — CONSIDERATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. — SINGULAR CHARACTER OF CHINESE POLITENESS. — THE BOUNDARIES WHICH SEPARATE THE FRONTIER OF SSE-TCHOUEN FROM THAT OF HOU-PÉ. — GLANCE OVER SSE-TCHOUEN — ITS PRINCIPAL PRODUCTIONS — CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS. — KOUANG-TI, GOD OF WAR, AND PATRON OF THE MANTCHOO DYNASTY — OFFICIAL WORSHIP PAID TO HIM. — WELLS OF SALT AND FIRE. — STATE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE CHINESE. — STATE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE PROVINCE OF SSE-TCHOUEN.

FOU-KI-HIEN is a town of the third rank, built on the left bank of the Blue River. We were struck on our arrival by the distinguished and elegant appearance of its inhabitants. It is said that literature is here held in great honour, and that the district of Fou-ki-hien contains immense numbers of students and lettered men of every grade.

As the Communal Palace is situated in a not very airy quarter, a very cool and pleasant lodging had been prepared for us in the *Wen-tchang-koun*, or Temple of Literary Composition, where the assemblies of the literary corporation are held, and the examinations for degrees take place.

We found this Wen-tchang-koun larger and richer

than any edifice of the kind that we had ever visited; it contained several halls devoted to special purposes, which were wainscoted with varnished wood, and furnished in the ornamental style of Chinese luxury and grandeur. These saloons are destined for literary meetings, as well as for banquets; for in China the admirers of the belles lettres by no means disdain gastronomic indulgences, and are as well inclined to criticise a good dish as a literary composition. When the company has become somewhat elevated with poetry or rice wine, they are invited to a stroll by a magnificent garden; on one side of which is seen, among great trees, a pretty pagoda, erected in honour of Confucius, and on the other a range of little cells, where, during the examinations, students are shut up, to write on the questions assigned them. No one is to have in his cell any thing more than an inkstand, some of the little brushes used for pens, and some blank paper; all communication with the outer world is interdicted until they have finished their composition, and to guard against the infraction of this important rule, a sentinel is placed at the door of each student.

An octagonal tower with four floors rises in the middle of the garden, and as we were known to be very fond of fresh air, they were so kind as to lodge us in the uppermost one, whence we enjoyed an enchanting prospect of the various quarters of the town, with its enclosure of embattled walls; beyond them the country, scattered over with farms, and covered with rich and varied vegetation, and the noble Blue River, whose windings we could trace far through the plain, till, after hiding itself for a little while behind

green hills, it reappeared, and then finally was lost to sight in the horizon.

As soon as we were installed, like feudal lords, in our donjon keep, the literary graduates and the functionaries of the town hastened to pay us a visit. We could not, however, afford more than a few hours to the demands of ceremony, for we much desired repose. The gentle rocking motion of the boat and the monotony of the languid conversation had both contributed to overpower us with sleep. As soon as possible, therefore, we told our servant to say we could not be seen any more, locked our door, and lay down on our reed mats.

While we were still in the transition state between sleeping and waking, we heard a voice not far from our door, and, listening, could distinguish the voice of our servant quarrelling, as it seemed, with a visitor who would take no denial, and insisted on seeing us, whether we would or not.

The visitor was alleging his title of doctor, and asserting that as the Wen-tchang-koun was the property of men of letters, it gave him the right of visiting, and even scrutinising, those who had taken up their lodging in it. Wei-chan resisted courageously, till at length the other, offended at an opposition so lively and unexpected, went so far as to strike him. The vociferation now became louder, the curious, as usual in such cases, came running from all quarters, and it was evidently necessary for us to get up, and give a lesson in the "Rites" to this impertinent doctor.

As soon as the door was opened, it was easy to see how the matter stood, for Wei-chan, fairly boiling over with anger, seemed ready to fly at the doctor, and eat

him up. He, on his side, was so occupied with his antagonist, that he did not notice us, till he felt himself seized stroggly by the arm, and, turning suddenly, was petrified at finding himself face to face with a Western devil in a yellow cap. We dragged him into our chamber, where he was summoned to give an account of himself.

"Who are you?"

"I am a doctor of this town."

"No! you are not a doctor, you are a rude and ignorant man. What do you want?"

"I came to walk in the Temple of Literary Composition, to recreate my mind and my heart."

"Go and recreate yourself elsewhere, and don't come here disturbing our rest. Take yourself quickly out of our presence! If you like you can tell your friends that you have seen us, and that we drove you out because you understood nothing of the social virtues."

The doctor shewed some symptoms of resistance. "But who then," cried he, "is master in the Wen-tchang-koun?"

"In our room we are masters, and, consequently, you must get out as fast as you can; and if you don't go by the staircase, we will throw you out of the window. Will you go?"

The doctor, doubtless, thought we were in earnest in this threat, for he disappeared in a moment, and we heard him running down the stairs at a great rate. This might be, perhaps, a good opportunity to say something of the pedantry and arrogance of the lettered Chinese; but we shall have occasion to speak on the subject by and by.

This little incident had quite taken away our inclination to sleep, so, after the doctor had departed, we

came down from our tower to explore the Temple of Literary Composition.

We were crossing the garden in the direction of the pagoda of Confucius, when we perceived, at the end of a long corridor that led to the street, an unfortunate man on his knees, and loaded with a great *cangue*. The cangue, as is well known, is an enormous block of wood, with a hole in the middle, through which the head of the criminal is passed; it presses with all its weight upon his shoulders, so that this atrocious torture makes a man, as it were, the foot of a huge heavy table.

We walked towards him, and the miserable creature immediately began to implore our mercy, and begged us to pardon him.

We came nearer, and were greatly affected to see in this horible situation a very respectable-looking man, with an honest face, who was shedding tears copiously, and imploring our forgiveness. It was a heartrending spectable.

We came nearer to read the sentence, which, according to custom, was written in large letters on strips of white paper, pasted on the cangue; and scarcely had our eyes glanced over the inscription, than we felt a cold perspiration covering our foreheads. This is what we read on several strips of paper: —

"Condemned to fifteen days of cangue, the nights not excepted, for the offence of disrespect towards the strangers of the West, who are under the protection of the Emperor. Let the people tremble, reflect, and correct their faults!"

On each of the three strips there was the red seal of the Prefect of Fou-ki-hien.

Fortunately the Tribunal was only a few yards off;

we ran thither, and obtained a short interview with the Prefect, who immediately came back with us, to set the unfortunate man at liberty. But before taking off the cangue, the Prefect thought proper to address to him a long speech, first on the merciful nature of our hearts, and then on the practice of the three social relations. We had hardly patience to listen to him, and there were some moments when we really should have been glad to see the untimely speechifier in the place of the sufferer, whose whole crime, it appeared, was the having said to one of the guardians of the temple, "Some years ago the Western devils came from the South, but now they come from the North too." The poor fellow had, it is true, applied to us a not very polite nickname, but he was not the inventor of it. It is under this malignant denomination the Europeans are best known in China; and if all those who use it were to be put in the cangue, the whole Empire would soon find its way there, beginning with the Mandarins.

As soon as the poor man had been released, we invited him to come to our room, and served him with tea and a little collation, explaining to him as well as we could, how grieved we were to have been the involuntary cause of his deplorable adventure. Our reconciliation was already complete, when, an old man with a white beard and two very young men were introduced to us; they were the father and the sons of the person who had become our friend in so singular a manner.

They threw themselves on their knees to express their gratitude, for what they had the simplicity to call our benefits. They burst into tears, and seemed not to know what to say to express their feelings, till at last we really could not bear it any longer. We had to do

indeed with Chinese, whose sincerity may always be a little suspected; but it is a horrible thing to see an old man sobbing and shedding tears. We rose, therefore, and bid farewell to these good people, for whom our passage through their country had been the occasion of such lively and painful emotions.

We quitted Fou-ki-hien with a certain feeling of regret; for it was not with this town as with so many others which left us no profound recollections, and which we traversed and left almost with the same indifference as our temporary encampments in the desert. We had only passed half a day at Fou-ki-hien, but we had felt there such strong and varied emotions, that it seemed as if we had made a long stay. The Temple of Literary Composition, that tower from the top of which we commanded a view of the town and country; the rash enterprise of the intrepid doctor; the unfortunate citizen sinking under the cangue, his deliverance, the pathetic visit of his father and children — all this seemed to make an epoch, and to leave behind it the most vivid remembrance. Time is a profound mystery, and the human soul alone is capable of estimating its duration. To live long is to think and feel much.

We had now to choose between the route by water and that by land, for the course of the Blue River would take us as far as our next stage. The last experiment had succeeded so well, that we had a mind to try it a second time; and we felt sure beforehand of finding the people of our escort quite of our opinion. In a boat we went faster, more conveniently, and with much less expense; they could, therefore, realise enormous profits which they divided among them, though

always in such a manner that the Mandarins had the greatest part. The palanquin bearers also found their advantage in it; for after having passed the day in playing at cards, they still received their customary wages; and provided the navigation was not dangerous, and that they would give us a good boat, we on our part were happy to be able to procure our conductors these advantages.

This second experiment was also crowned with complete success, and quite reconciled us to the Blue River for which we had before felt so great an antipathy. We came, from time to time, to some rather difficult places, reefs of rocks on a level with the water; but the skill and experience of our mariners always carried us past them without damage. It was almost night when we arrived at *Ou-chan*, where we were conducted to the Communal Palace, well received and well treated. The evening wore on, however, and we had not yet seen any of the authorities of the place, except an officer of very inferior rank, who held an appointment at the port, in the Salt Custom-house. This was by no means conformable to established rule; and as we were always on our guard to suffer no encroachment on the privileges that had been granted to us, and which constituted our strength and our security, we begged to have it explained why we were deprived of the honour of a visit from the Mandarins of Ou-chan? The reply was that the Prefect was absent. "And his deputy?" "Absent too." "And the military commandant of the district?" "He set off this morning. All the functionaries, civil and military, are absent on government business." We treated this as a bad joke, and thought we should have to put to rights,

every day, a machine that was constantly threatening to get out of order.

We ordered our palanquin, and invited Master Ting to be good enough to accompany us immediately to the Prefect's tribunal. He made no objection, and we set off. The tribunal was closed, we had it opened. All the lights were out, we had them kindled. We entered the saloon of reception, and the servants of the Prefect hastened to offer us tea; but no ball, of any colour whatever, was to be seen. At last, the *sse-ye* presented himself. These sse-ye are counsellors or pedagogues, whom the magistrates choose for themselves, to aid and direct them in the management of affairs; they are paid by the magistrate, and do not belong officially to the administration, but their influence is immense; they are in fact the springs that set the wheels of the tribunal in motion. The sse-ye of Ou-chan assured us, that the Prefect and the other principal functionaries had been absent for several days, engaged in the investigation of a cause of the highest importance. We begged his pardon for coming to disturb him at so late an hour; but added, that having to see the Prefect we would, since he was absent, await his return. No doubt that would in some measure delay our arrival at Canton; but that this would be of no great consequence, as our business allowed of a certain latitude; and thereupon we returned to the Communal Palace.

Master Ting had heard our conversation with the sse-ye; and he needed no more to convince him that we were about to take up our quarters at Ou-chan, to await the return of the Prefect, and that until then nothing would induce us to move. He had by this time become a little accustomed to the barbarism of our character

and the inflexibility of our resolutions. We had hardly, therefore, returned to the Communal Palace before he began laughingly to warn the travellers that they might sleep in peace, for that it was our intention to fix ourselves definitively at Ou-chan.

The next day, when the sun was tolerably high, all the inhabitants of the palace were still plunged in sleep; the most profound silence reigned all over it. Nothing was to be heard but the sound of a torrent, which behind the house was dashing over great rocks that opposed its passage.

This tranquillity rather flattered us, for it showed the attention that had been paid to what we had said the evening before.

Soon after noon, however, we heard, all on a sudden, a great clamour mingled with the sound of the tam-tams and the noisy detonations of fireworks. An officer of the tribunal now came to inform us, that the Prefect had arrived with the other Mandarins of the town. We made no delay in receiving his visit, and he presented himself, accompanied by the military commandant of the district, who was decorated with the Blue Ball, and bore the title of *tou-sse*. He was of the same rank as *Ly*, the "Pacificator of Kingdoms," who after having long served us for an escort across the frightful route of Thibet, died so miserably without ever seeing his country again.

The Chinese have so elaborately developed their system of lying and deceit, that it is very difficult to believe them, even when they do speak the truth. Thus we were persuaded that this absence and return of the Prefect and the Mandarins of Ou-chan was only a trick, yet we were nevertheless mistaken; and the

Chinese, extraordinary as it may seem, had not told a lie. As soon as we saw the Prefect and the military commandant, it was easy for us to perceive that they really had just come from a journey; the exhaustion evident in their faces, the dust with which they were covered, their disordered garments, all announced that they had been passing many hours in their palanquins.

The Prefect was a man of about sixty years of age, with a gray beard, a short thick-set figure, and a merely moderate amount of *embonpoint*. His face had an expression of simplicity and good nature, extremely rare in Chinese physiognomies, and especially in those of the Mandarins. The tou-sse was about the same age, and rather above the middle size, though a little bent; his countenance also was very open, but he did not belong to the Chinese race. He was of Mongol origin, and had passed his youth in the Land of Grass, leading a nomadic life in the deserts; several of the countries he had wandered over, were perfectly well known to us. When we spoke the Mongol language to him, he seemed quite affected, and would certainly have shed some tears, if he had not feared to compromise his character as a soldier. These two personages pleased us; we were very glad we had waited for them, and they, on their side, seemed very well satisfied to see us, which we believed so much the more, because they did not endeavour to express it by any of the emphatic formulas of Chinese politeness. We read it on their faces; and this method afforded us a far more satisfactory proof than the other would have done.

The Prefect of Ou-chan entered into some details concerning the motives of his absence. He had gone with his assessors to a village under his jurisdiction, to

inquire into the case of a man found dead in a field, and determine whether the death had been a natural one, or the result of a murder or suicide. We addressed several questions to him, on a certain method employed by Chinese justice, in order to make the wounds and contusions of a dead body appear, even after decomposition has begun, and thus to ascertain the mode of death.

We had heard a great deal of the measures adopted by magistrates on such occasions, and, indeed, some such extraordinary things, that we were very glad to get some information about them from an authentic source.

The Prefect had not now time to satisfy our curiosity on all points; but he promised to come back in the evening, and bring with him the book entitled *Si-yuen;* that is to say, "The Washing of the Pit;" a work on medical jurisprudence, very celebrated in China, and which should be in the hands of all magistrates. The Prefect kept his word; and the evening was devoted to a rapid examination of this curious book, upon which also the Mandarins of Ou-chan did not fail to furnish many commentaries, as well as to relate a number of anecdotes that we will not repeat, as we have no means of testing their truth.

In all times, the Chinese government has shown great solicitude for the discovery of homicide and the examination of bodies found dead. After the conflagration and destruction of the libraries by the famous Tsing-che-hoang, there remained no work on medical jurisprudence of older date than the dynasty of Song, which began in the year 960 of our era.

The Mongol dynasty of Yuen, which succeeded that

of Song, had the work remodelled, and enlarged it with the accounts of a number of ancient customs that tradition had preserved in various parts of the Empire. After the dynasty of Yuen, that of Ming instituted researches and examinations on this important question, and had many successive works published for the instruction of magistrates. The Mantchoo dynasty has published a new edition of the Si-yuen, or "Washing of the Pit." To dig this pit a dry and, if possible, clayey soil must be chosen; the pit must be made five or six feet long, three wide, and as many deep; it is then to be filled with dry branches of trees and brushwood, and a fire kept up in it, till the sides and the bottom are heated almost to a white heat. The ashes are then taken out, a quantity of rice wine poured in, and the dead body placed over the opening, on a hurdle made of osier twigs; then the whole is covered with tiles placed in a hollow form, so as to leave every part of the body free to be acted upon by the vapour of the rice wine. Two hours afterwards, every mark of a wound or a blow will appear quite distinctly. The Si-yuen declares that the same operation may be performed with the bones, and the same results obtained; and it adds, that if the blows have been of a nature to cause death, the marks will always appear on the bones.

The Mandarins of Ou-chan asserted that all this was perfectly correct; but we have ourselves had no opportunity of verifying their assertion.

It is the duty of the Mandarins to perform this operation every time that there arises the least suspicion concerning the death of an individual; they are even obliged to have the body disinterred if it has been

buried, and to examine it carefully, even though the exhalations from it should be likely to endanger their lives; "for," says the Si-yuen, "the interest of society requires it, and it is not less glorious to brave the danger of death, to defend one's fellow-citizens from the knife of the assassin, than from the sword of the enemy. He who has no courage, ought not to be a magistrate, and should resign his office."

The Si-yuen passes in review all imaginable methods of causing death, and explains the mode of ascertaining them by examination of the body.

The Chinese appear to have invented a terrific variety of modes of murder. The article "strangling" especially is very rich; the author distinguishes those "Strangled by hanging," "Strangled on the knees," "Strangled lying down," "Strangled with a slip knot," and "Strangled with a turning knot." He describes carefully all the marks likely to appear on the body, and indicates the differences where the individual has strangled himself. On the subject of drowning he says, that the bodies of the drowned are very different from those thrown into the water after death. The first have the abdomen much distended, the hair sticking to the head, foam in the mouth, the hands and feet stiff, and the sole of the foot extremely white. These signs are never found in those thrown into the water after being suffocated, poisoned, or killed in any other way. As it often happens, in China, that a murderer endeavours to conceal his crime by a fire, the Si-yuen, under the chapter of the "Burned," teaches how to find out by inspection of the body, whether the deceased has been killed before the fire or suffocated by it; among other things it says, that in the first case, neither ashes nor

vestiges of fire are found in the mouth and nose, whilst these signs are always found in the latter.

The last chapter treats of the various kinds of poison, and their antidotes; but however skilful and vigilant magistrates may be, it may easily be supposed that all these practices make a very imperfect substitute for the opening of the body, which ancient and inveterate prejudices forbid to be done in China.

It is impossible to read the Si-yuen without being convinced that the number of attempts against life in this country is very considerable, and especially that suicide is very common. The extreme readiness with which the Chinese are induced to kill themselves, is almost inconceivable; some mere trifle, a word almost, is sufficient to cause them to hang themselves, or throw themselves to the bottom of a well; the two favourite modes of suicide. In other countries, if a man wishes to wreak his vengeance on an enemy, he tries to kill him; in China, on the contrary, he kills himself. This anomaly depends upon various causes, of which these are the principal:—In the first place, Chinese law throws the responsibility of a suicide on those who may be supposed to be the cause or occasion of it. It follows, therefore, that if you wish to be revenged on an enemy, you have only to kill yourself to be sure of getting him into horrible trouble; for he falls immediately into the hands of *justice*, and will certainly be tortured and ruined, if not deprived of life. The family of the suicide also usually obtains, in these cases, considerable damages; so that it is by no means a rare case for an unfortunate man to commit suicide in the house of a rich one, from a morbid idea of family affection. In killing his enemy, on the contrary, the murderer exposes his own relatives and friends to injury,

disgraces them, reduces them to poverty, and deprives himself of funeral honours, a great point for a Chinese and concerning which he is extremely anxious. It is to be remarked also, that public opinion, so far from disapproving of suicide, honours and glorifies it. The conduct of a man who destroys his own life, to avenge himself on an enemy whom he has no other way of reaching, is regarded as heroic and magnanimous.

Finally, we may say that the Chinese dread suffering much more than death. They will sell their lives very cheaply if they can hope to get rid of them in an expeditious manner; and it is, perhaps, this consideration that has induced Chinese justice to render the trial of a criminal almost more frightful and terrible than death.

China is the country of contrasts; all that you see there is the opposite of what you see any where else. Among barbarians, and even in civilised countries where true notions of justice have not sufficiently purified the public conscience, you see the strong, the rich, the powerful, making the poor and weak tremble, oppressing them and sporting with their lives with frightful carelessness; in China, it is often the weak who make the strong and powerful tremble, by holding suspended over their heads the threat of suicide, and forcing them by that means to do them justice, spare them, and help them. The poor have recourse sometimes to this terrible extremity, to avenge themselves for the hard-heartedness of the rich, and it is by no means unusual to repel an insult by killing yourself. It would be interesting to compare this mode of duelling *à la Chinoise*, with that which is in use among European nations; there might be traced some curious analogies, and one

would be forced to agree that there is pretty much the same extravagance and absurdity in the one case as in the other.

The functionaries of Ou-chan treated us with remarkable affability, and our talk was prolonged far into the night; each one reported concerning the manners and customs of his country; China, Mongolia, and France asserted their respective pretensions, by the mouth of their representatives; and it was at last agreed that all countries have a fund of good and bad qualities, which pretty well balance each other; though we endeavoured, nevertheless, to prove that Christian nations are, or might be, more virtuous than others, since they were always under the influence of a holy and divine religion, tending essentially to develope good qualities and stifle bad ones. The Mandarins declared our reasoning quite conclusive; and asserted, if not from conviction at least from courtesy, that France occupied incontestably the first rank among the ten thousand kingdoms of the earth. Their good-will towards us was even carried so far as to invite us seriously and sincerely to stop another day at Ou-chan; the temptation was great, but we resisted it, because it was essential to preserve for our extraordinary halts the peculiar character that we had endeavoured to give them. Besides, since the Mandarins of Ou-chan had had the politeness to invite us to stop, we were so much the more bound to have the politeness to go. Politeness before everything! It is quite the custom in China to give the most pressing invitations, but only on condition that they shall be refused; to accept them would be to show that you had had a very bad education.

During the time when we were at our Northern

Mission, we were witnesses of a most curious fact, which was wonderfully characteristic of the Chinese. It was one of our festival days, and we were to celebrate the Holy Office at the house of the First Catechist, where there was a tolerably large chapel, to which the Christians of the neighbouring villages were in the habit of coming in great numbers. After the ceremony the master of the house posted himself in the middle of the court, and began to call to the Christians who were leaving the chapel: — "Don't let anybody go away. To-day I invite every one to eat rice in my house;" and then he ran from one group to another urging them to stay. But every one alleged some reason or other for going, and went. The courteous host appeared quite distressed; at last he spied a cousin of his, who had almost reached the door, and rushed towards him saying, "What, cousin! are you going too? Impossible! this is a holiday, and you really must stop." "No," said the other, "do not press me, I have business at home that I must attend to." "Business! what to-day, a day of rest! Absolutely you shall stop, I won't let you go;" and he seized the cousin's robe and tried to bring him back by main force, while the desired guest struggled as well as he could, and sought to prove that his business was too pressing to allow of his remaining. "Well," said the host at last, "since you positively cannot stay to eat rice, we must at least drink a few glasses of wine together. I should be quite ashamed if my cousin went away from my house without taking anything." "Well," replied the cousin, "it don't take much time to drink a glass of wine," and he turned back; they re-entered the house and sat down in the company room. The master then called in a loud voice, though without appearing

to address any one in particular :—" Heat some wine, and fry two eggs ! "

In the meantime, till the hot wine and fried eggs should arrive, the two lighted their pipes and began to gossip, and then they lit and smoked again, but the wine and eggs did not make their appearance.

The cousin, who most likely really had some business, at last ventured to inquire of his hospitable entertainer, how long he thought it would be before the wine was ready.

" Wine ! " replied the host, " wine ? Have we got any wine here ? Don't you know very well that I never drink wine ? it hurts my stomach."

"In that case," said the cousin, "surely you might have let me go. Why did you press me to stay ?"

Hereupon the master of the mansion rose, and assumed an attitude of lofty indignation.

" Upon my word," said he, " anybody might know what country you come from ! What ! I have the politeness to invite you to drink wine, and you have not even the politeness to refuse ! Where in the world have you learned your rites ? Among the Mongols, I should think." And the poor cousin, understanding that he had been guilty of a terrible solecism, stammered some words of apology, and filling his pipe once more, departed.

We were ourselves present at this delightful little scene; and as soon as the cousin was gone, the least we could do was to have a good laugh ; but the master of the house did not laugh, he was indignant. He asked us whether we had ever seen such an ignorant, stupid, absurd man as his cousin, and he returned always to his grand principle, that is to say, that a well-bred man will always

render politeness for politeness and that one ought kindly to refuse what another kindly offers; "otherwise," he cried, "what would become of us?" We listened without deciding the question for or against him; for in what depends upon the customs of nations, it is very difficult to have one sure and certain rule applicable to all; and in looking closely at the matter, we thought we could make out their peculiar views of politeness. Both parties by this means obtain at small cost, the satisfaction of appearing generous and obliging to everybody, and on the other hand, every body can obtain the satisfaction of knowing that he receives a great many kind invitations, and yet has the delicacy to refuse them. Yet, after all, it must be owned this is mere *Chinesery*.

The pressing solicitations of the Mandarins of Ou-chan notwithstanding, we next day resumed our march, like men who had been in good society, and studied the rites elsewhere than in the deserts of Mongolia. This day journey was a very toilsome one; first, because it was two days since we had been in a palanquin, and our legs had lost the habit of bending; and secondly, because we had to traverse a mountainous country. Its aspect was not at all pleasing, but wild and melancholy. The soil was gravelly and sandy, and ill adapted to cultivation; we saw few villages, and when some miserable-looking farmhouses did appear here and there in the bottom of a valley, the inhabitants generally ran to us to ask for a few sapecks by way of alms.

Towards the afternoon, we climbed a rather steep hill, Master Ting marching at the head of the column. As soon as he had reached the summit, he got out of his palanquin, and by degrees as the others arrived he made

them stop too. We did not comprehend quite well the meaning of this manœuvre; but when we too reached the top of the hill, Master Ting invited us to alight from our palanquins, saying, "Come and see! Here finishes the province of Sse-tchouen. We are about to enter *Hou-pé*. This little ditch is the boundary of the two provinces, and I did not like to cross the mountain without pointing it out to you. See," he added, striding with one leg across the ditch, "now I have one leg in Sse-tchouen, and another in Hou-pé:" and he stood motionless for a minute, in order to enable us fully to conceive this astounding fact.

Several palanquin bearers, who seemed to think it very strange to have one leg in Sse-tchouen, and the other in Hou-pé, repeated several times the same interesting experiment, and succeeded just as well as the civil Mandarin. Then after we had rested a short time, and looked eagerly to the right and the left, the way we had come and the way we were going, we set off again, and arrived shortly afterwards at *Pa-toung*.

Sse-tchouen (Four Valleys) is the largest province in China, and perhaps also the finest. So at least it appeared to us, after having compared it with the other parts of the Empire that we have had occasion to study in our various journeys. From the frontiers of Thibet to the boundaries of Hou-pé are reckoned forty days' march, equivalent nearly to an extent of three hundred leagues. Besides a great number of forts and war stations, there are counted in this province nine towns of the first class, and a hundred and fifteen of the second and third.

Its temperature is moderate, both in winter and summer, and neither the long and terrible frosts of the

northern nor the stifling heats of the southern provinces are ever felt in it.

Its soil is, from the abundance of rivers by which it is watered, extremely fertile, and it is also pleasantly varied. Vast plains covered by rich harvests of wheat and other kinds of corn, alternate with mountains crowned with forests, magnificently fertile valleys, lakes abounding in fish, and navigable rivers. The Yang-tse-kiang, one of the finest rivers in the world, traverses this province from south-west to north-east. Its fertility is such, that it is said the produce of a single harvest could not be consumed in it in ten years. Great numbers of textile and tinctorial plants are cultivated in it; among others the herbaceous indigo, which gives a fine blue colour, and a kind of hemp or thistle, from which extremely fine and delicate fabrics are produced. On the hills are fine plantations of tea, of which all the most exquisite kinds are kept for the epicures of the province. The coarsest are sent off to the people of Thibet and Turkestan.

It is to Sse-tchouen that the pharmacists from all the provinces of the Empire send their travellers to lay in their stocks of medicinal plants; for, besides that immense quantities are collected in the mountains, they have the reputation of possessing more efficacious virtues than those found in other countries. A considerable trade is also carried on here with the rhubarb and musk brought from Thibet.

It would seem as if the richness and beauty of Sse-tchouen had exercised a great influence on its inhabitants; for their manners are much superior to those of the Chinese of the other provinces. The great towns are, at least relatively, clean and neat. The aspect of the

villages, and even of the farms, bears witness to the comfortable circumstances of their inhabitants; and throughout Sse-tchouen you hear nothing of the unintelligible *patois* so common in the other provinces; — the language is nearly as pure as that spoken in Pekin.

The Sse-tchouennese are of a robust temperament and a more masculine physiognomy than that of the Chinese of the south; though at the same time not so harsh as that of the northerns. They have the character of being good soldiers, and it is mostly from amongst them that the greater number of military Mandarins is chosen. The province is rather proud of its warlike genius, and of having given birth to a famous general, of whom they have made a god of war. This Chinese Mars is the celebrated *Kouang-ti*, whose name is so popular throughout the Celestial Empire, and who was born in Sse-tchouen in the third century of our era. After gaining many splendid victories over the enemies of the Empire, he was killed, with his son *Kouang-ping*, who has been made his *aide-de-camp*.

The Chinese, who have of course not failed to fabricate a number of extravagant legends concerning him, pretend that he did not really die, but ascended to heaven, where he took his place amongst the gods, in order to preside over the fortunes of war. The Tartar Mantchoo dynasty, in ascending the Imperial throne of China, performed the apotheosis of Kouang-ti and solemnly proclaimed him tutelary spirit of the dynasty. A great number of temples have been raised to him in all the provinces of the Empire, where he is usually represented sitting in a calm, but proud attitude.

His son Kouang-ping, armed *cap-à-pie*, stands at his left hand; and on his right hand is seen his faithful squire,

holding a large sword, knitting a pair of very thick eyebrows, opening great, round, bloodshot eyes, and apparently intent on nothing but frightening all who look at him.

The worship of Kouang-ti belongs to the official state religion of China; the people trouble themselves very little about it, and care no more for their god of war than for any of the other Buddhist divinities. But the public functionaries, and especially the military Mandarins, are obliged, on certain days, to go and prostrate themselves in his temple, and burn sticks of incense in his honour. The Mantchoo dynasty, after having taken the trouble to make a god of him, appoint him to be the protector of the Empire, and raise magnificent pagodas in his honour, is of course not going to put up with indifference or want of devotion to him in its own servants.

The Mantchoos, who, in establishing the worship of Kouang-ti, probably had in view nothing more than a political object, and regarded it only as a means of influencing the minds of the soldiers, have not neglected to lend their authority to the fable of his appearance in all the subsequent wars of the Empire. At various epochs, especially during the war against the Eleuts, and more recently against the rebels of Turkestan, he has been plainly seen, hovering in the air, supporting the courage of the Imperial armies, and overwhelming their enemies with invisible arrows. It is certain, they say, that, with so powerful a protection, they can never fail of victory. One day, when a military Mandarin was relating to us with great *naïveté* stories of the prowess of the famous Kouang-ti, we bethought ourselves to ask him, whether he had appeared in the last war that the

Empire was engaged in with the English. This question seemed to vex him a little, and after a moment's hesitatation he said: "They say he did not, no one saw him."

"It was a very serious affair though, and his presence was by no means unnecessary."

"Don't let us talk any more of that war," said the Mandarin; "Kouang-ti certainly did not appear, and it is a very bad sign. They say," he added, lowering his voice, "that this dynasty is abandoned by Heaven, and that it will be soon overthrown."

This idea that the Mantchoo dynasty has finished its appointed career, and that another will shortly succeed to it, was very widely diffused in China in 1846; during our journey we several times heard it mentioned, and there is little doubt that this kind of vague presentiment, prevailing for several years, was a very powerful auxiliary to the insurrection that broke out in 1851, and since then has made such gigantic progress.

The wonder of Sse-tchouen, and one that deserves to be placed even before the famous Kouang-ti, is what the Chinese call the *Yen-tsing* and *ho-tsing*, wells of salt and wells of fire. We saw a great number of them, but without having time to examine them attentively enough to give a full description of them, and we will therefore quote on this subject a letter of M. Imbert, long a missionary in this province, but subsequently appointed Vicar Apostolic in Corea, where he had the honour to be martyred in 1838. The minute details contained in this letter are very fit to give an exact idea of the patient and laborious industry of the Chinese. We will therefore give the passage as it stands.

"The number of salt wells is very considerable; there

are some dozens of them in a tract of country of about ten leagues long by four or five broad. Every one here who has made a little money, looks out for a partner, and begins to dig one or more wells. Their manner of digging is not like ours; these people do everything in miniature; they have no idea of carrying on any operation on a grand scale, but with time and patience they attain their objects, and at much less expense than we do. They have not the art of opening rocks by blasting, and all these wells are in the rock. They are usually from fifteen to eighteen hundred French feet deep, and only five or six inches in diameter. The mode of proceeding is this. If there be a depth of three or four feet of soil on the surface, they plant in this a tube of hollow wood surmounted by a stone, in which an orifice of the desired size of four or five inches has been cut. Upon this they bring to work in the tube a rammer of three or four hundred pounds weight, which is notched, and made a little concave above and convex below; a strong man, very lightly dressed, then mounts on a scaffolding, and dances all the morning on a kind of lever, that raises this rammer about two feet, and then lets it fall by its own weight. From time to time a few pails of water are thrown into the hole, to soften the material of the rock, and reduce it to pulp. The rammer is suspended to a rattan cord, not thicker than your finger, but as strong as our ropes of catgut.

"This cord is fixed to the lever, and a triangular piece of wood is attached to it, by which another man sitting near gives it a half-turn, so as to make the rammer fall in another direction. At noon this man mounts on the scaffold, and relieves his comrade till the

evening; and at night these two are replaced by another pair of workmen.

"When they have bored three inches, they draw up the tube, with all the matter it is loaded with, by means of a great cylinder, which serves to roll the cord on. In this manner these little wells or tubes are made quite perpendicular, and as polished as glass. Sometimes the ground is not rock all through, but beds of coal and other materials are found, and then the operation becomes more difficult, and sometimes even entirely useless; for, as these substances do not all offer equal resistance, it may happen that the well loses its perpendicularity; but these cases are rare. Sometimes the large iron ring that suspends the rammer, breaks, and then five or six months' labour are needed before it is possible, with the help of other rammers, to break up the first and reduce it to a pulp. When the rock is good, the work advances at the rate of two feet in twenty-four hours, so that about three years are required to dig a well. To draw water from it, a tube of bamboo, twenty-four feet long, is put down, at the bottom of which there is a valve or sucker; when it has reached the bottom, a strong man sits on the rope, and shakes it, so that every shake opens the sucker, and makes the water rise. The tube being full, a great spindle-shaped cylinder of fifty feet in circumference, upon which the rope is wound, is worked by two, three, or four buffaloes, till it is drawn up. This rope also is made of rattan. These poor buffaloes, however, are very ill suited to this labour, and they die in great numbers. If the Chinese had our steam-engines, they would be able to perform the work at less cost, but thousands of working people would die of hunger.

"The water of these wells is very salt; it gives, on evaporation, one-fifth, or even sometimes one-fourth. The salt is also of very acrid quality, so much so as often to inflame the throat to a painful degree; and it is then necessary to make use of sea-salt, which is brought from Canton or Tonquin.

"The air that issues from these wells is highly inflammable. If when the tube full of water is near the top you were to present a torch at the opening, a great flame twenty or thirty feet in height would be kindled, which would burn the shed with the rapidity and explosion of gunpowder. This does happen sometimes through the imprudence of workmen, or in some cases from a malicious desire to commit suicide in company. There are some wells from which fire only, and no salt, is obtained; they are called *Ho-tsing*, fire wells. A little tube of bamboo closes the opening of the well, and conducts the inflammable air to where it is required; it is then kindled with a taper, and burns continually. The flame is of a bluish colour, three or four inches high, and one inch in diameter. Here the fire is not sufficient to boil the salt, but at about forty leagues off there are much larger fire wells.

"To evaporate the water, and prepare the salt, they make use of large brass tubs, about five feet in diameter, and only four inches deep.

"The Chinese have found out that, in presenting a larger surface to the fire, the evaporation goes on more quickly and the fuel is economised. This tub, or cauldron, is surrounded by other deeper ones, containing water, which boils at the same fire, and serves to feed the large tub, so that the salt, when evaporated, completely fills the tub, and takes its form. The block of

salt weighs two hundred pounds and upwards, and is as hard as stone; it has to be broken into three or four pieces for the purposes of commerce.

"The fire is so strong, that the cauldron becomes red hot, and the water throws up great bubbles to the height of eight or ten inches. When the fossil fire from the wells is made use of, the ebullition is still more violent, and the cauldron is calcined in a short time, although those employed in that case are three or four inches thick.

"For all these salt wells great quantities of coal are consumed, and various kinds of it are found in the country; but the thickness of these beds of coal varies from only one inch to five. The subterranean path leading to the mine is so steep, that bamboo ladders are placed in it. The coal is in large pieces. The greater part of these mines contain much of the inflammable air of which I have spoken, and it is impossible to use lamps in them. The miners either grope about in the dark, or make a kind of light with resin and saw-dust, which burns without flame, and does not go out. When a salt well has been dug to the depth of a thousand feet, a bituminous oil is found in it, that burns in water. Sometimes as many as four or five jars of a hundred pounds each are collected in a day. This oil is very fetid, but it is made use of to light the sheds in which are the wells and cauldrons of salt. The Mandarins, by order of the Prince, sometimes buy thousands of jars of it, in order to calcine rocks under water, that render the navigation perilous. When a shipwreck takes place, the people make a kind of lamp of this oil, which they throw into the water near the spot; and then a diver,

and oftener still a thief, goes down to search for any article of value that he can carry away, the subaqueous lamp lighting him perfectly."

"If I knew a little more of physical science, I could tell you what this inflammable and subterraneous air of which I have spoken really is. I do not believe that it is produced by a subterranean volcano, because it needs to be kindled, and when kindled it never goes out, unless in a most violent gust of wind, without the tube being stopped up by a ball of clay. Showmen often fill bladders with it, and carry it about the country; they make a hole in the bladder with a needle and kindle it with a taper, to amuse simpletons. I believe that it is a gas, or spirit of bitumen, for the fire is very fetid and gives out a thick black smoke." *

"These coal mines and wells of salt afford occupation to large masses of the population, and there are some wealthy persons who have as many as a hundred wells belonging to them; but these colossal fortunes are soon dissipated. The father amasses, and the children spend all in gambling or debauchery.

"On the 6th of January, 1827, I arrived at *Tse-liou-tsing* (that is 'wells flowing of themselves'), after a march of eighteen leagues made in my thick shoes with iron nails an inch long, on account of the mud that renders the roads slippery.

"This little Christian community only contains thirty communicants; but I found there the most beautiful wonder of nature, and the greatest effort of human industry that I have met in all my travels — a subjugated volcano.

* This is no doubt what chemists call carburetted hydrogen.

"The place is in the mountains, on the borders of a little river. It contains, like Ou-tong-kiao, salt wells dug in the same manner, that is to say, with an iron rammer of three hundred pounds weight. There are more than a thousand of these wells or tubes containing salt water; and, besides this, every well contains inflammable air, which is conducted through a bamboo tube, lit with a taper, and cannot be put out without vigorous blowing. When they wish to get the salt water they extinguish the fire tube, for otherwise the inflammable air, coming up in great quantity with the water, would cause an explosion in the mine. In one valley there are four wells which yield fire in terrific quantities, and no water; that is doubtless the centre of the volcano. These wells at first yielded salt water: and the water having dried up, about twelve years ago another well was dug to a depth of three thousand feet and more, in the expectation of finding water in abundance. This hope was vain, but suddenly there issued from it an enormous column of air, filled with blackish particles. I saw it with my own eyes. It does not resemble smoke, but the vapour of a fiery furnace, and it escapes with a frightful roaring sound, that is heard far off. It blows and respires continually, but never inspires; but it is possible that its inspirations may be made in some lake, perhaps the great lake of Hou-kouang, two hundred leagues off. There is, on a mountain about a league off, a small lake, about half a league in circumference; but I cannot think that sufficient to feed the volcano. This little lake has no communication with the river, and is only fed with rain water.

"The opening of the well is surrounded by a wall of freestone, six or seven feet high, to guard against the

well being set on fire by accident or malice, a misfortune which did really happen last August. The well is in the middle of an immense court, with large sheds in the centre, where the cauldrons are placed for the boiling of the salt; and on that occasion, as soon as the fire touched the surface of the well, there arose a terrific explosion, and a shock as of an earthquake, and at the same moment the whole surface of the court appeared in flames. These flames, however, though about two feet high, seemed to flutter over the surface of the ground without burning anything. Four men, with great self-devotion, went and rolled an enormous stone over the surface of the well, but it was thrown up again immediately into the air. Three of the men were killed; the fourth escaped; but neither water nor mud would extinguish the fire. At length, after fifteen days' labour, a sufficient quantity of water was collected on a neighbouring mountain, to form a large lake or reservoir, and this was let loose all at once upon the fire, by which means it was extinguished; but at a cost of thirty thousand francs, a large sum for China.

"At the depth of a foot below the ground, four enormous bamboo tubes are fixed in the four sides of the well, and these conduct the inflammable air beneath the cauldrons. More than three hundred are boiled by the fire from a single well, each of them being furnished with a bamboo tube, or fire conductor. On the top of the bamboo tube is one of clay, six inches long, with a hole in the centre six inches in diameter; this clay hinders the fire from burning the bamboo. Other tubes, carried outside, light the large sheds and the streets. There is such a supply of fire, that it cannot all be used; and the excess is carried by a tube, outside the enclosure

of the salt works, into three chimneys, out of the tops of which the flame leaps to a height of two feet.

"The surface of the ground within the court is extremely hot, and seems to burn under the feet; even in January the workmen are all half-naked, having nothing on but a short pair of drawers. I had, like other travellers, the curiosity to light my pipe at the fire of the volcano, and found it extremely active. The cauldrons here are four or five inches thick, and they are calcined and unfit for use at the end of a few months.

"The water is received through bamboo tubes into an enormous cistern; and a chain pump, worked night and day by four men, forces it into an upper reservoir, whence it is conducted in tubes to feed the cauldrons. Four-and-twenty hours' evaporation produces a cake of salt six inches thick, and as hard as stone. This salt is whiter than that of *Ou-tong-kiao* and affects the throat less; possibly the coal employed at Ou-tong-kiao may make the difference, or it may be in the water itself. The latter contains a greater amount of salt than that of *Tse-liou-tsing;* it produces three or even four ounces of salt for every pound of water; but at Ou-tong-kiao the coal is dear, while at Tse-liou-tsing the fire costs nothing. These two districts have to sell their salt in different towns, and custom-house officers see that this arrangement, which has been approved by the government, is not disturbed.

"I forgot to tell you that this fire produces scarcely any smoke, but a strong bituminous vapour issues from it, which I could perceive at two leagues off. The flame is reddish, like that of coal; it does not seem to issue directly from the orifice of the tube, as that of a lamp might, but it begins about two inches above it, and then

rises about two feet. In the winter the poor, to warm themselves, dig a round hole of a foot deep in the ground in which they place a handful of straw and set light to it, and a dozen of these poor creatures will then seat themselves round it. When they have warmed themselves sufficiently they fill up the hole with sand and the fire is put out."

From this account we may form some idea of the character of Chinese industry. The physical sciences are among them still in the elementary stage, and only cultivated with a view to immediate practical application; but the Chinese supply in some measure the place of knowledge by their most prodigious patience. It is remarkable that, with modes of proceeding so extremely simple and resources so limited, they are able to obtain results that would elsewhere require a considerable amount of science. Their turn of mind tends always to simplification; scientific machinery would only embarrass them, and they would perhaps not succeed so well; but with their sagacity and perseverance they contrive to effect the most difficult things. They take time for their fulcrum and patience for their lever; these are the two great principles of Chinese physical science.

It is, nevertheless, true that a certain amount of this kind of knowledge has existed among the Chinese from the most remote antiquity, and has descended from generation to generation, sometimes in the form of a family secret, sometimes disseminated in a receipt book. With these very simple aids, they attain results that with us are only the fruits of science and study. Thus the Chinese are able to work mines, and to amalgamate metals and work them in all sorts of ways: they cast

bells and statues in bronze and other metals; they manufacture enormous porcelain vases; they build towers, and construct on their rivers magnificent and remarkably solid bridges: they have dug a fine canal from one end of the Empire to the other. At two different epochs they have undertaken gigantic works of extreme difficulty, to change the course of the Yellow River; and they know how to produce all colours and combine them in a wonderful manner. We might pass in review all the products of their arts and industry, which have often a great deal of merit, and we should be compelled to acknowledge, that in China, as elsewhere, there are chemists, mathematicians, and natural philosophers.

Their systems, it is true, are not scientifically arranged and based upon fixed general principles. The Chinese would be unable to say according to what laws they obtain certain chemical combinations; they would content themselves with showing you some old receipt which, as experience has taught them, will attain the end in view. Their miners could not assuredly explain in a satisfactory manner why that combination of saw-dust and resin which they make use of for a light will not kindle the gas in the mines, and produce an explosion; but assuredly it answers for them the purpose of Davy's celebrated safety-lamp.

Although, however, scientific results may thus be obtained by them without science, yet the knowledge of the Chinese must always remain scattered and desultory. It is very difficult for them to make any progress, or indeed to avoid retrograding from the point already attained. Their decay in many departments has begun years ago, and they acknowledge that they could not now do many things that were easy to them in times past. The natural

sciences have no part whatever in their system of instruction, and since the knowledge slowly gathered from experience during a long course of ages has no other guardians, for the most part, than ignorant workmen, many very useful and important ideas are unavoidably lost. A more intimate relation with Europe can alone preserve from perishing many of these precious germs, which may one day develope themselves under the influence of modern science.

Sse-tchouen, the most remarkable, in our opinion, of the eighteen provinces of China, is also that in which Christianity is the most flourishing. It counts nearly a hundred thousand Christians, mostly zealous and faithful in the fulfilment of their duties ; their numbers also are obviously on the increase from year to year.

The prosperity of this mission arises from its never having been entirely abandoned like many others. At the period even of our most disastrous revolutions, whilst France herself, without priests and without a worship, could hardly be supposed to occupy herself with the religious interests of China, the Christians of Sse-tchouen still had the happiness of retaining in the midst of them apostles full of zeal and fervour, who watched with care over the precious sparks of faith, whilst waiting till better times should permit new missionaries to come and revive the sacred fire of religion in those countries. The province of Sse-tchouen has now been entrusted to the care of the Society of Foreign Missions, which is gathering the fruits of its zeal and perseverance.

The Christian community of Sse-tchouen, besides being the most numerous in China, presents also some peculiar features. Everywhere else * the neophytes, in town

* The province of Kiang-nan must be excepted.

and country, have been mostly recruited from amongst the most indigent classes; but it has not been thus in Sse-tchouen; for, although the propagation of the faith has not yet reached the summit of society, the greater number of Christians are found in its middle ranks.

Of course, in a religious point of view, the poor are at least of as much consequence as the rich, and we must not forget that shepherds came before kings, to adore the Saviour of the world in his manger; but it happens that many of the Chinese are simple enough to believe that a certain sum is always given to catechumens on the day of their baptism, and that people thus become Christians from motives of worldly interest. It is advantageous, therefore, to do away with this idea, and let them see that Christianity is professed by people in easy circumstances, who have no need of alms. It is also well that the missions should be self-supporting, and be able to found schools and build chapels for themselves.

Sometimes, it is true, the prosperity of the missions has this disadvantage, that it tends to excite the cupidity of the Mandarins, who are willing enough to let the poor alone, but keep up a most watchful superintendence over those houses where there is anything to take. On the whole, however, the balance of advantage may be said to be on the side of prosperity in the missions.

The families may, by uniting their strength, obtain a certain amount of influence, intimidate the satellites, and compel the Mandarins to spare them; for in China, in order to make yourself respected, it is sufficient to take a formidable attitude. In traversing the province of Sse-tchouen, we remarked that the Christians appeared to enjoy a greater amount of liberty than elsewhere; or at least make greater efforts to assert their claim to

what has been granted them. They venture to assemble and proclaim publicly that they are Christians. One day we saw a number of them in their Sunday clothes, walking in procession with a banner at their head, to the celebration of a festival in a neighbouring village; and it was Ting himself who pointed out the fact to our observation.

We are persuaded that if all the Christians of China stood on the same footing as those of Sse-tchouen, it would not be so easy as it has been to subject them to persecution.

CHAP. VIII.

ARRIVAL AT PA-TOUNG, A FRONTIER TOWN OF HOU-PE. — LITERARY EXAMINATIONS. — CHARACTER OF THE CHINESE BACHELOR. — CONDITION OF WRITERS. — WRITTEN LANGUAGE. — SPOKEN LANGUAGE. — GLANCE AT CHINESE LITERATURE. — THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE AN IMMENSE LIBRARY. — STUDY OF CHINESE IN EUROPE. — EMBARKATION ON THE BLUE RIVER. — SALT CUSTOM-HOUSE. — SMUGGLING MANDARIN. — DISPUTE WITH THE PREFECT OF I-TCHANG-FOU. — A MANDARIN WISHES TO PUT US IN CHAINS. — SYSTEM OF CUSTOMS IN CHINA. — I-TOU-HIEN, A TOWN OF THE THIRD CLASS. — AMIABLE AND INTERESTING MAGISTRATE OF THAT TOWN. — GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHINESE. — NARRATIVE OF AN ARAB WHO TRAVELLED IN CHINA IN THE NINTH CENTURY BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

AFTER leaving Sse-tchouen behind us, a few hours' march brought us to *Pa-toung*, a little town of *Hou-pé*. Although we were now no longer in the country subject to the jurisdiction of the Viceroy Pao-hing, we were received as we had been in all the towns of Sse-tchouen; for the orders that had been given respecting us were to remain in force till we should arrive at *Ou-tchang-fou*, the capital of Hou-pé. The authorities of Pa-toung treated us there with the accustomed ceremony; but scarcely had we reached it before we noticed the most complete and extraordinary change in the tone and manner of the people of our escort. Mandarins, satellites and soldiers — all appeared metamorphosed with that elastic suppleness which is the most striking

feature in the Chinese character. They had all at once become peaceable and modest to a degree that was really admirable. The reason of this was, that they had now entered what they regarded in some measure as a foreign country, and they had left all their domineering pride on the frontiers of their own province, of course with the full intention of resuming it when they went back. For the present, however, their business was to avoid compromising themselves, and "draw in their hearts" so as to continue their journey in safety.

The Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had warned us that, in the province of Hou-pé, the communal palaces were few in number, and not convenient for us. At Pa-toung we found none at all, but we lost little by that, for we went to lodge in the *Kao-pan*, that is to say, "the Institution." The Kao-pan, or theatre of examinations, is, like the wen-tchang-koun, a palace of literary composition, an edifice belonging to the learned corporation. That of Pa-toung had nothing remarkable in its construction, but as it was exquisitely clean and had vast apartments, it was fresh and cool. The examinations had taken place only a few days before, and we found the various decorations still arranged as for the ceremony. In the evening we had visits from a crowd of the literary personages, amongst whom were several who we must own appeared to us exceedingly stupid.

This literary corporation was organised as early as the eleventh century before the Christian era, but the system of examinations existing at present does not date farther back than the eighth century before the commencement of the great dynasty of Tang. Before this epoch the magistrates were elected by the people;

but at present, as we have said, universal suffrage has been preserved only in the communes, in the election of the mayors, who bear the name of *ti-pao* in the south, and of *sian-yo* in the north of the Empire.

The literary examinations are, like everything else, degenerating and sinking to decay. They have no longer the grave, earnest, impartial character that was doubtless impressed on them at the time of their institution. The corruption which has spread through everything without exception in China has also found its way among both examiners and examined. The rules that ought to be observed in the examinations are extremely stringent, with a view to prevent any kind of fraud, and discover the true merit of the candidate; but, by certain financial methods, a way has been found to neutralise the effect of these precautions. A rich man can always find out beforehand the subjects proposed for the various compositions; and, what is worse, even the suffrages of the judges are sold to the highest bidder.

A student who knows he is not capable of going through the examination, or who has not been able to procure the programme of the questions, coolly goes with a certain sum in his hand to some poor graduate who has the requisite ability, and who merely takes the name of the candidate for honours, assumes his place, and brings him back the diploma. It is a regular branch of industry, which is carried on almost publicly in China; and the Chinese, in their picturesque language, have given to the gentlemen who have obtained their degree in this fashion, the name of crupper bachelors.

The number of bachelors is very considerable; but, for want of resources, pecuniary as well as intellectual,

there are very few who attain to the higher degrees, which fit them for public offices. Those who are in easy circumstances, however, may at least enjoy the incomparable happiness of wearing a gilt ball in their caps. They are fond of public ceremonials, parades, and assemblies, at which they may display their pretensions. Sometimes, too, they occupy their leisure with literature, and compose novels, or pieces of poetry, which they read to their colleagues, and receive plenty of compliments, of course on conditions of reciprocity. Poor literary graduates, who hold no public office, form in the Empire a class apart, and lead a kind of life that it is difficult to describe. Real laborious work is not at all accordant to their tastes and habits. To occupy themselves with industry, commerce or agriculture, would be much beneath their dignity. Those who wish in earnest to gain a livelihood become schoolmasters or doctors, or endeavour to fill some subaltern office in the tribunals; others become mere adventurers, and live on the public in various ways. Those who live in the large towns have very much the aspect of ruined gentlemen, and they have little other resource than to visit and bore each other at their common expense, or arrange plans to avoid dying of hunger. Very often they contrive to extort money from the rich and the Mandarins, who having always plenty of administrative sins upon their consciences, do not care to have for enemies a set of idle, hungry bachelors, always ready to weave some intrigue or lay a trap for the man in office. Lawsuits are also a grand resource for this useful class of society. They apply themselves assiduously to fomenting quarrels, and embittering the parties against each other; and then they undertake for a certain little reasonable

consideration to appease and reconcile them, or, as they say in their language, to give them some commentaries on law. Those whose imaginations are not sufficiently lively and fertile to suggest all these modes of industry, endeavour to live by their pens, which they manage with admirable skill. They drive a little trade in sentences finely written on strips of coloured paper, such as the Chinese consume in large quantities for the decoration of their doors and the interior of their apartments. It is almost superfluous to add, that these literary geniuses, "*incompris*" of the Celestial Empire, are also the agents of secret societies, and the agitators in times of revolution. The proclamation, the placard, and the pamphlet, are weapons that they know how to manage just as well as their brethren of the West.

Although literature is in China very much encouraged by the government, and by public opinion, this encouragement does not proceed so far as to afford an income to its professors. Nobody here makes a fortune by writing books; more especially such books as novels, romances, and poetry or dramatic pieces. However good these may be, very little value is attached to them. Those who are capable of appreciating them read them of course, but merely as an amusement. No one thinks of the author, who indeed on his side never dreams of putting his name to his productions. People in China read very much as they take a walk in a garden, for the sake of a momentary recreation; they admire the trees, the verdure, the splendour and variety of the flowers, but all this without ever thinking of the gardener, much less asking his name.

The Chinese are full of veneration for "sacred and classical books," and their esteem for great works on

history and morals is in some measure a religion with them, the only one perhaps that they profess seriously; for they are accustomed to consider literature from the point of view of serious utility. The class whom we call authors are in their eyes only idle persons who pass their time in amusing themselves by making prose or verse. They have no objection to such a pursuit. A man may, they say, "amuse himself with his pen as with his kite, if he likes it as well—it is all a matter of taste."

The inhabitants of the Celestial Empire would never recover from their astonishment if they knew to what extent a work of this kind may be in Europe a source of honour and often of wealth. If they were told that any one may obtain great glory among us by composing a drama or a romance, they would either not believe it or set it down as an additional proof of our well known want of common sense. How would it be if they should be told of the renown of a dancer or a violin player, and that one cannot make a bound, or the other draw a bow anywhere, without thousands of newspapers hastening to spread the important news over all the kingdoms of Europe!

The Chinese are too decided utilitarians to enter into our views of the arts. In their opinion a man is only worthy of the admiration of his fellow creatures when he has well fulfilled the social duties, and especially if he knows better than any one else how to get out of a scrape.

You are regarded as a man of genius if you know how to regulate your family, make your lands fruitful, traffic with ability, and realise great profits. This at

least is the only kind of genius that is of any value in the eyes of these eminently practical men.

In a preceding chapter we endeavoured to give an idea of the system of instruction adopted in China; and since we are now at the Kao-pan it will be a good opportunity for completing the survey, by casting a glance over the Chinese language and literature, concerning which many very inaccurate ideas prevail.

"A curious and frequent contrast," says M. Abel Rémusat, "is presented by the lively curiosity with which we inquire into all that relates to the manners, the character, and the creed of Oriental nations, and the profound indifference with which the Asiatics regard our intellectual progress, our institutions, and even the masterpieces of our industry. It seems that we have always need of others, and that the Asiatics alone suffice to themselves. The Europeans, so disdainful, so proud of the progress they have made in the arts and sciences, during these three hundred years, are continually asking what is thought and felt by men whom they regard as so far inferior to them in every respect. The Asiatics care nothing about what the Europeans think; whether they think at all, or whether they exist at all. In Paris and in London there are many people studying Oriental literature; at Teheran or Pekin nobody knows whether the West has a literature or not. The Asiatics do not dream of contesting our intellectual superiority; they simply ignore it, and never trouble themselves about it, which is incomparably more mortifying for men so much inclined to value themselves upon it as we are."

In Europe, in France and England especially, a lively interest has been felt now for some years in all that passes in the Celestial Empire. All that comes from

this country excites curiosity; and we are determined to make acquaintance with the eccentric nation, which is so bent on living by itself in the world.

Now, it seems to us, that the primary cause of the eccentric character of this people is to be found in the extraordinary character of their language. It is most emphatically true of the Chinese that the literature is the expression of society.

That which distinguishes the Chinese language from all others, is its surprising originality, its great antiquity, its immutability, and, above all, its prodigious extension over the most populous countries of Asia. Of all the primitive languages, not only is it the only one still spoken in our own day, but it is also the most in use of all living modes of speech. Chinese, with various modifications, is spoken in the eighteen provinces of the Empire, in Mantchooria, Corea, Japan, Cochin China, Tonquin, and several islands of the Straits of Sunda. It is unquestionably the language the most widely diffused throughout the world, and that which transmits the ideas of the greatest number of men.

The Chinese language is divided into two quite distinct parts, the written and the spoken. The written language is not composed of letters combined together for the formation of words; it is not alphabetical; it is a collection of an immense number of written characters, more or less complicated, of which each expresses a word and represents an idea or an object. The primitive characters used by the Chinese were signs or rather coarse drawings, which imperfectly represented material objects.

These primitive characters were two hundred and fourteen in number. There were some for the heavens;

others for the earth and for man; the parts of the body; domestic animals, such as the dog, the horse, the ox; for plants, trees, quadrupeds, birds, fish, metals, &c. Since this first invention of Chinese writing, the forms of these coarse paintings have been changed; but, instead of improving, they have corrupted them; only the primitive strokes have been preserved, and it is with this small number of figures that the Chinese have composed all their characters and found means to satisfy the numerous requirements of their civilisation.

The first Chinese must have soon discovered the insufficiency of their two hundred and fourteen primitive signs; by degrees, as society advanced and the circle of their knowledge enlarged, new wants must have made themselves felt, the number of characters had necessarily to be increased; and for that a new method adopted, for it would not do to have a number of new figures that, as they were multiplied, would be confounded together. How with these rude sketches could it be possible to distinguish a dog from a wolf or a fox; an oak from an apple or tea tree? How especially would it be possible to express human passions, anger, love, and pity, abstract ideas, and operations of the mind?

In the midst of these difficulties there does not seem to have been at any time an idea of introducing an alphabetical, or even syllabic system; the Chinese could obtain no knowledge of such a one among the barbarous and illiterate nations by whom they were surrounded; and, besides, they have always had the highest opinion of their written language, regarding it as a celestial invention, the principle of which was revealed to *Fou-hi*, the founder of their nationality. They were forced, therefore, to have recourse to combinations of the

primitive figures; and by this means they formed an immense multitude of signs, composed for the most part arbitrarily, but which sometimes present ingenious symbols, lively and picturesque definitions, and enigmas, the more interesting as the solution has not been lost. Natural objects, and many others which can be assimilated to them, are all classed under the animal, tree, or plant, which was the type of them in the hundred and fourteen primitive characters; the wolf, the fox, the ram, and the other carnivora, were referred to the dogs; the various species of goats and antelopes, to the sheep; the deer, the roebuck, and the animal that produces musk, to the stag; the other ruminants, to the ox; the *rodentia*, to the rat; the *pachydermata*, to the pig; the hoofed, to the horse. The name of every creature is thus composed of two parts; one relating to the kind, the other determining the species by a sign indicative either of the peculiarities of conformation, the habits of the animal, or the use that may be made of it. By this ingenious method are formed real natural families, which, with the exception of a few anomalies, might be acknowledged by modern naturalists.

With respect to abstract ideas and acts of the understanding the difficulty was greater; but it was not less ingeniously met. To paint anger, they make a heart surmounted by the sign of a slave; a hand holding the symbol of the middle designates the historian, whose first duty it is to incline to neither side; the character signifying straightness and also that of walking represented the government, which should be rectitude itself in action; to express the idea of a friend, they placed two pearls, one beside the other, because it is so difficult to find two pearls exactly matching one another.

For many of the words the figure is entirely arbitrary; but there are great numbers of which the analysis would be very interesting. The ancient missionaries mention several; but they are far from having exhausted the subject, or even studied it under its most curious relations.' It would be impossible to calculate the traditions, the allusions, the unexpected analogies, the picturesque and epigrammatic features which are thus enclosed in these characters; and it is incredible what light would be thrown on the ancient moral and philosophical opinions of the primitive nations of Oriental Asia by studying carefully, while guarding against too hasty theorising, these symbolical expressions; in which they have painted unconsciously, themselves, their manners, and the whole order of things under which they have lived, and with which history has made us so imperfectly acquainted, since they date from a time when history was not.

Chinese characters were at first traced with a metallic point upon little bamboo tablets; and it was with a view of facilitating their execution, that by degrees the primitive form was modified, until the figurative type was almost lost. The stiffness of their strokes also was much softened three centuries before our era, after two important discoveries; the art of making paper with the bark of the mulberry or bamboo, and the not less precious one of preparing the substance we call Indian ink. The small brush or pencil then took the place of the metallic graver, successive modifications were again introduced in the figure, till at last they arrived at the present character, formed from the combination of a certain number of strokes, either straight or slightly curved.

Chinese writing is at first sight disagreeable, from its strangeness; but when one is accustomed to it one soon begins to think it pretty and even graceful. All these characters firmly drawn with a pencil acquire a degree of delicacy and beauty; a really good Chinese handwriting is both graceful and bold; and the slender, bony fingers of the Chinese manœuvre their pencils with surprising dexterity. They write their characters one above another in a vertical line; and this arrangement does not allow the reader to see the whole phrase at once as in horizontal writing: they begin their lines by the right of the page; in a word, they proceed in exactly the contrary way to the European. The number of characters successively introduced by the combination of strokes amounts to thirty or forty thousand in the Chinese dictionaries; but two-thirds of these are seldom used, and, by cutting off the synonyms, five or six thousand characters, with their various significations, would amply suffice to understand all original texts.

It has been said, and repeated over and over again, that the Chinese pass their lives in learning to read, and that even the old learned men depart this life without having accomplished the difficult enterprise. The notion is amusing, but fortunately for the Chinese very incorrect.

If to know a language it were necessary to know every word in it, how many Frenchmen would be able to boast of being acquainted with their native tongue? How many people are familiar with the innumerable technical phrases that fill up the greater part of our dictionaries? It has been imagined and asserted in very serious works that Chinese writing is purely ideographic. This is an error. It is ideographic and pho-

netic at the same time; but as the demonstration of the truth could not very well be made intelligible to those who have not a considerable knowledge of the mechanism of the language, we will content ourselves with giving one proof that will be understood by all.

The Chinese characters are so far phonetic, that in all our missions those who learn to serve the mass have for their use a little book in which the Latin prayers are written out in Chinese characters. How could that be if they were simply ideographic? How could they render and express exactly the sounds of our European language?

In the Pagoda Libraries, what are the greater part of the books of prayer that the Buddhist priests have to learn from one end to the other, but Chinese transcriptions of Sanscrit books? The Bonzes study them, and repeat them without at all comprehending their meaning, because by means of these so-called *ideographic* characters they have translated the sound without the sense. It may be said, that every Chinese character is composed of two elements, which may in general be easily distinguished, one ideographic the other phonographic. Is not this the case with all writing? It belongs to philologists and not to us to determine these questions?

The Chinese in their written language have three distinctions of style: the antique or sublime style, the type of which is to be found in the ancient literary monuments, and which exhibits very rare grammatical forms; the common or vulgar style, remarkable for a great number of ligatures, and the employment of words composed to avoid homophony and facilitate conversation; and, finally, the academic style, which par-

takes of the two preceding, being less concise than the antique and less prolix than the vulgar. A profound acquaintance with the antique style is necessary for reading the ancient books; and in general all the works that treat of historical, political, or scientific subjects, since they are always written in a style that approaches the antique. The vulgar style is employed for light productions, theatrical pieces, private letters, and proclamations intended to be read aloud.

The spoken language is composed of a limited number of monosyllabic intonations; namely, four hundred and fifty, which by the very subtle variation of the accents are multiplied to about sixteen hundred. It results from this that all Chinese words are necessarily grouped in homophonous series, whence a great number of double meanings may arise either in reading or speaking; but this difficulty is avoided by coupling synonymous or antithetic words. In this manner the ambiguities disappear, and the conversation is no longer embarrassed.

The language called *Houan-hoa*, that is to say, common universal language, is that which the Europeans wrongfully designate by the name of Mandarin language, as if it were exclusively reserved for the Mandarins or functionaries of government.

The Houan-hoa is the language spoken by all instructed persons throughout the eighteen provinces of the Empire, and in this a distinction is made between the language of the north and that of the south. The first is that of Pekin; it is marked by a more frequent and sensible use of the guttural or aspirate accent. It is spoken in all the provincial government offices; the officers of which affect to imitate the pronunciation of

the capital, which in China, as elsewhere, is regarded as the regulator of propriety of language.

The common language of the south is that of the inhabitants of Nankin, who cannot give utterance to the guttural accent, like those of the north; but whose more flexible voices give the varieties of intonation with greater accuracy. Very likely when Nankin was the capital of the Empire * its pronunciation was the most esteemed.

Besides the two subdivisions of the universal, or, as the Europeans say, the Mandarin language, there exist in the various provinces of China particular local idioms or *patois*, in which the pronunciation differs much from that of the universal language. It happens sometimes that one side of a river does not understand the other; but, as it is only on account of difference of pronunciation, recourse can always be had to writing. There are also, in addition to these *patois*, dialects peculiar to the provinces of *Kouang-tong* and *Fo-kien*.

The literature of China is certainly the first in Asia, by the importance of its monuments, the number of which is prodigious. Some estimate may be formed of it by the catalogue of the Imperial Library of Pekin, which contains 12,000 titles of works with tables of contents. In the principal catalogues Chinese literature is divided into four great sections. The first is that of sacred or classical books, of which we have already spoken in a preceding chapter. The second is of those on history. The Chinese count, on the whole, twenty-four complete histories of the different dynasties anterior to the Mantchoo, without counting chronicles and memoirs.

* Pekin means court of the north, and Nankin that of the south.

The first great collection of ancient historical monuments in China and the neighbouring countries is due to the celebrated *Sse-ma-tsien*, an Imperial historian of the first century before our era. It is composed of 130 books divided into five parts. The first comprehends the fundamental chronicle of the Emperors; the second consists of chronological canons; the third treats of the rites of music and astronomy, the division of time, &c.; the fourth contains biographies of all the families which have been possessors of principalities; and the last, which is composed of seventy books, is devoted to memoirs concerning foreign countries and biographies of illustrious men.

In the middle of the eleventh century Sse-ma-kouang, whose Poetic Garden we have already mentioned, edited a complete series of annals from the eighth century before Christ to the year 960, the date of the accession of the dynasty of Song, under which he lived. Father de Mailla has given a translation of them under the title of General History of China, continuing it also to the first Emperor of the Mantchoo dynasty.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century *Ma-touan-lin* published his celebrated historical encyclopædia, entitled Profound Researches into Ancient Documents of every Kind.

This famous historian does not content himself with registering documents; he discusses and explains them, and his work is the richest mine that can be consulted upon all that relates to government, political economy, commerce, agriculture, scientific history, geography, and ethnography.

The third section is that of special works relating to the arts and sciences. It comprises, first, moral treatises,

the familiar dialogues of Confucius, the elementary lessons and conversation of the celebrated Tchu-hi, treatises on the passions and on the education both of men and women; secondly, works on the military art; thirdly, special treatises on the penal laws; fourthly, on agriculture and the management of the silk-worm; fifthly, on medicine and natural history, comprehending the descriptions of animals, vegetables, and minerals; sixthly, practical treatises on astronomy and mathematics; seventhly, on the science of divination; eighthly, on the liberal arts, namely, painting, writing, music, and the art of drawing the bow; ninthly, essays on the coining of money, on making ink, and the preparation of tea; tenthly, general encyclopædias, with illustrations; eleventhly, works descriptive and illustrative of ancient and modern nations; twelfthly, treatises on the Buddhist religion; thirteenthly, numerous treatises by adepts of the sect of Tao; fourteenthly, mythological works.

The fourth and last section comprehends works of light literature, such as poetry, the drama, romances, and novels.

In China there are not, as in Europe, public libraries and reading-rooms; but those who have a taste for reading and a desire to instruct themselves can satisfy their inclinations very easily, as books are sold here at a lower price than in any other country. Besides, the Chinese find everywhere something to read; they can scarcely take a step without seeing some of the characters of which they are so proud. One may say, in fact, that all China is an immense library; for inscriptions, sentences, moral precepts, are found in every corner written in letters of all colours and all sizes. The façades of the tribunals, the pagodas, the public

monuments, the signs of the shops, the doors of houses, the interior of the apartments, the corridors, all are full of fine quotations from the best authors. Tea-cups, plates, vases, fans, are so many selections of poems, often chosen with much taste and prettily printed. A Chinese has no need to give himself much trouble in order to enjoy the finest productions of his country's literature. He need only take his pipe and walk out, with his nose in the air, through the principal streets of the first town he comes to. Let him enter the poorest house in the most wretched village; the destitution will often be complete, things the most necessary will be wanting; but he is sure of finding some fine maxims written out on strips of red paper. Thus, if those grand large characters, which look so terrific in our eyes, though they delight the Chinese, are really so difficult to learn, at least the people have the most ample opportunities of studying them, almost in play, and of impressing them ineffaceably on their memories.

The study of Chinese was long regarded in Europe as a thing extremely difficult, if not impossible. Who, indeed, with the conviction that the Chinese themselves could not succeed in learning properly to read, would have been willing to engage in so hopeless an enterprise? But the prejudice has at last been overcome, and philologists have found out that Chinese may be learned as easily as other foreign languages. M. Abel Rémusat is perhaps the first who had the resolution to attempt in earnest to conquer the obstacles which seemed to forbid access to it; but when this learned Orientalist had in some measure smoothed the way, and shown by his example that it was possible to acquire a knowledge of the language of Confucius, many learned men threw themselves

eagerly into the route that he had pointed out, and at present there may be counted in Europe several distinguished Chinese scholars; at the head of whom stands M. Stanislas Julien, who has attained to so thorough a knowledge of this language, that we are persuaded very few, even of the Chinese themselves, are equally capable of understanding the more abstruse productions of their literature.

With respect to the spoken language, Chinese does not present as many impediments and difficulties as many of the languages of Europe.

The pronunciation alone requires some pains, especially in the beginning; but by degrees you become familiar with the exigencies of accents and aspirates, especially when you live in the country, and have no intercourse with any but natives. In making these few remarks on the Chinese language, we have thought that we should probably meet the wishes of our readers; but it is now time to resume our itinerary.

Master Ting had often predicted to us, that when we reached Hou-pé we should look back with regret on Sse-tchouen. We should, he said, find the inhabitants coarse in their manners, unobservant of the Rites, and speaking an unintelligible language. Then the roads were detestable; there was seldom a Communal Palace to be met with, but in its place only a very bad inn. Our first halt at Pa-toung, however, by no means justified these sombre previsions. We were in the province of Hou-pé, and we found ourselves just as well off as before. We were treated with civility, and the Kao-pan or Theatre of Examinations, which served us for a lodging, was certainly as good as a Communal Palace. We had, nevertheless, gathered some information on the road

that was by no means agreeable; the Mandarins and literary men whom we met were unanimous in declaring that we should find the journey from this stage toilsome and difficult; that the roads were badly kept, and that we should find no good palanquin bearers. All this proceeded from the proximity of the Blue River. The navigation of that river, they said, was so cheap and easy, that both travellers and merchandise generally went by water; and although always on our guard against the deceit and falsehood of the Chinese, their arguments this time appeared plausible enough; and it was agreed that we should follow the course of the river as long as possible; on condition, however, of landing every evening, and passing the night at the towns previously marked out for our halts.

The first night after leaving Pa-toung we stopped at *Kouei-tcheou*, where, except a good deal of commercial bustle in the port, we found nothing remarkable. The next day we embarked very early; and our escort was increased by the addition of a military officer and some soldiers, to protect us, it was said, against the pirates. We passed without accident a place dangerous from its numerous reefs; some of the last met with on this fine river, which beyond this place goes on increasing from day to day, and spreading richness and fertility around it. There is certainly no one in the world to be compared with it for the multitude of men whom it feeds, and the prodigious number of vessels that it bears on its waters. Nothing can be more grand and majestic than the development of this river during its course of 1980 miles. At *Tchoung-king*, 900 miles from the sea, it is already a mile and a half broad; at its mouth it is no less than twenty-one.

Before we reached I-tchang-fou, a town of the first class, we passed a little custom-house for the salt duties, and our boats had to stop for the visit of the officers. We thought it rather strange that Mandarins' boats should be subjected to these visits; but Master Ting assured us it was all according to rule. "These visits," he said, "are on account of the crews of the boats, who sometimes profit by the presence of public functionaries to do a great deal of smuggling; you must, therefore, resign yourselves and have patience."

We resigned ourselves therefore,—and had patience accordingly. The custom-house officers first visited the boat in which the soldiers were, and, having found in it no more salt than was necessary for culinary purposes, allowed it to set sail again and continue its passage.

Afterwards, they came on board of ours; and, when they had politely saluted the passengers, they requested the master of the vessel to take them down into the hold. "The hold!" he exclaimed, with an air of the utmost astonishment; "you would spoil your fine clothes. I have ballasted my vessel with mud, and you know very well that when one carries Mandarins one does not carry merchandise."

"Who knows," cried the little military Mandarin whom we took up at Kouei-tcheou; "perhaps these two noble Europeans come here to smuggle salt;" and then he applauded his own wit by a shout of laughter. The officers, however, did not allow themselves to be disconcerted by this hilarity, but quietly began their search; and shortly afterwards we heard a tremendous uproar. There in the hold, sure enough, had been found, not mud, but a considerable cargo of salt? and the chief smuggler was no other than the said military Mandarin who had

been put on board to protect us against pirates. The affair now became serious; an embargo was immediately laid on the vessel, and every one on board became compromised. Every one, therefore, master, sailors, custom-house officers, Mandarins, and our intrepid smuggler with the gilt ball, began to vociferate at once. We were the only listeners; but it was by no means easy to make out what any one was saying. All we could understand was, that the sailors were exclaiming against the skipper, the skipper against the smuggler, the smuggler and the custom-house officers against everybody else. Master Ting was perfectly sublime in his wrath; he rushed from one to the other, bawling and gesticulating vehemently, but without seeming to know or care whether any one listened to him. When and how was all this to finish? That was what we were trying to find out, but we could not succeed.

During this inconceivable uproar the vessel of course was standing still. It was already late, and it appeared we should not get to the port, though it was but a little way off. To wait till all parties were agreed was evidently out of the question; and we saw no other resource than to throw ourselves into the *mêlée*. We seized, therefore, upon Master Ting, the custom-house officers, and the smuggler, and drove them before us down the ladder into our cabin. As soon as we had secured our men, we forbad them to say another word about salt. The boat we said had been hired to take us—*us* to I-tchang-fou. We had already been subjected to a long delay, and it mattered to us very little whose fault it was, we should make them all responsible. "Let us set off again," we said; "and when you are once in port, you make take as long as you like to

settle your quarrel." They were about to recommence their explanations, but one of us kept them blockaded in the between-decks, while the other went up and gave orders to the master to set sail again; and he did so, carrying with him the custom-house officers in despair at leaving their station.

As soon as we had reached the port, we hastened to effect our disembarkation, leaving the salt question to be discussed by those whose business it was. It was almost dark when we entered the town of I-tchang-fou. We had for a guide a very ill-looking fellow, whom the Prefect had sent to meet us on the shore, and who took us to what he called a Communal Palace. In this fine large town of the first class, they could find for two Frenchmen travelling under the protection of the Son of Heaven no better lodging than a damp hole, without doors, windows, or furniture, and already serving as a barrack to legions of rats, whose noise and foul odour made us shudder. We restrained our indignation; for what was the use of saying anything to that man, who doubtless had done nothing but obey orders?

After having, with the aid of a lantern, attentively inspected this pretended Communal Palace, we gave orders to carry ourselves and our baggage immediately to the Prefect's Tribunal. We were introduced there into a great hall, where we hastened to have our palanquins deposited and our trunks arranged, giving our servant Wei-chan to understand that he might set up his little *ménage* in a corner. Whilst we were quietly occupied with these arrangements the people of the tribunal went and came perpetually; but without ever addressing a word to us, and merely interrogating Master Ting, who replied always by a series of little

cringes, but without saying a word, for fear of compromising himself either with us, or the authorities of the place. At last the Hall of Guests was opened, and the Prefect entered at one end and we at another; and after having reciprocally performed some profound salutations, we went and sat down on the divan. Directly afterwards, tea, and some fine slices of water-melon were served. The conversation did not get on very well; but fortunately we could get over part of the embarrassment by busying ourselves, the Prefect with his tea, and we with our melon.

The magistrate of I-tchang-fou perceiving that we manifested a decided taste for this refreshing fruit, endeavoured to make use of it as a bait to entice us away from his house, and make us go and lodge where he had intended to put us. "This fruit is excellent in this warm weather," said he. "Delicious," said we. "I am going to select two," he continued, "which I will send for you to the Communal Palace. You have seen it, I suppose; I gave orders to have you taken there."

"We were taken to a damp, dilapidated place, swarming with rats; we could not lodge there."

"Yes, I have been told it was not very dry; but that's an advantage in summer—the damp keeps it cool. Besides, it is the best place we have for guests. I-tchang-fou is a great town, it is true, but it is very poor; there are no good lodgings in it; you may ask the people here."

"We never said I-tchang-fou was not a poor town, we are persuaded it is; we only said we could not lodge there."

"In that case," said the Prefect, sulkily, "will you lodge in my house?"

Since he had had the politeness to invite us to remain, we ought, according to the Rites, to have had the politeness to go immediately; but we were not Chinese.

"Yes, thank you," we replied; "we shall be very comfortable here;" and then we complimented with great prodigality of expression the beauty and magnificence of his tribunal. The Prefect now rose, saying that it was late, and that it would be necessary to prepare our beds. He added, with a bow, that we had done him great honour in not disdaining to lodge in his miserable habitation; but we saw in his face that he was furious.

As soon as he had gone, we established ourselves very commodiously in a large room, next to the Hall of Reception; and the first part of the night was passed very peaceably: but not so the last; towards midnight we were awakened by a noisy conversation. The functionaries of I-tchang-fou, who probably had also been supping at the tribunal, had gone afterwards into the saloon which was next our chamber; and there they did not hesitate to criticise us very freely. The smallest details of this piquant conversation were distinctly audible to us. They analysed us completely, morally and physically. Some had the charity to consider us as endurable, and not to say too much against us; others said that we had not been long enough in the Central Kingdom to become acquainted with the Rites, and that it was easy to see in us the signs of the bad education people get in the West. There was one who appeared especially excited against us, and did all he could to bring his comrades to his own way of thinking; so that, if they had listened to him, our

journey would not have been continued in a very agreeable manner.

"They are treating these people a great deal too well," said he; "they pretend that the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen treated them with distinction; but in my opinion he was quite in the wrong; he would have done much better to put a cangue upon them. These men who go wandering about out of their own country ought to be punished. They must be treated with severity. That's the way! If our Prefect was not afraid of them, they would be more obedient. Let him only put them into my hands and you shall see. I will load them with chains, and take them in that way to Canton." We thought we recognised the voice of the gentleman who promised us these little favours. It was a military Mandarin, who had been boasting with much pride and arrogance of having been in the war against the English, and of having seen the western devils near enough not to be afraid of them.

The talk of this person, to say the truth, annoyed us. There was certainly no cause to fear; we were in favour with the Government, and no one probably would venture to lay hands on us; nevertheless, we had still a long way to go, and they might occasion us a great deal of trouble. It was well to be on our guard, not certainly by "making our hearts small" in the Chinese fashion; but, on the contrary, by enlarging them. We got up, therefore, very quietly; and, after having put on our robes of state, abruptly opened the door, and bounced out upon our fiery warrior. "Here we are," we said; "go and fetch your chains, since that is the way you mean to take us to Canton, you shall do so immediately; go and fetch them, do you hear?" Our

sudden appearance disconcerted the conspirators; but we pursued our future conductor, roaring to him to go for his chains, while for every step we made forward he drew one back. At last we fairly drove him into a corner of the room, looking terribly frightened. "But," stammered he; "I don't understand what all this is about. Who wishes to chain you? Who could have the right to do so?"—"You, of course; you said so just now, we heard you. Chain us then directly, if you like."—"I do not understand, I do not understand," still repeated the valiant Mandarin. "Nobody here ever said such a word. How could we think of such a thing as chaining you? Are we not here to serve you?"

By degrees the rest of the company began to join in the conversation, every one protesting that what we had ourselves heard had never been spoken. That was all we wanted. Our *sortie* had been as successful as we could desire, and we now returned to our room, convinced that we need not make ourselves at all uneasy about the braggings of the Mandarins of I-tchang-fou. The council did not assemble again, and as soon as we had retired every one went home.

In the morning the Prefect hastened to express his regrets for the vexatious occurrence of the night. He assured us that the Mandarin whose conversation had annoyed us had a bad tongue, but a good heart; and that every one there felt the greatest regard for us.

"We are perfectly convinced of that," we replied; "but the circumstance that took place last night was very scandalous. All the servants in the house were witnesses of it, and the news has, probably, by this time, been spread all over the town. Every one knows, no doubt, that one of the military officers of the town

undertook to put chains upon us; and, under these circumstances, we do not think it would accord with our dignity to set off again directly. We will repose here for a day. It must not be thought that we hastened to get away because we were afraid. For the sake of our own honour and yours, every one must know that we have been treated properly by the authorities of I-tchang-fou."

The Prefect was evidently vexed to hear us speak in this way; but he admitted the legitimacy of our reasoning, and resigned himself to the hard necessity of keeping us another day in his tribunal.

The day passed in peace, and even rather agreeably. We saw again the Mandarins with whom we had made acquaintance during the night, with the exception, however, of the formidable antagonist of the English army. It was in vain that we invited him, and assured him that we had no more inclination to chain others than to be chained ourselves, he would not come; but he sent us his visiting card, alleging his innumerable occupations as the cause that would prevent his waiting on us in person.

We profited by this day of rest to see the town; but we found nothing remarkable in it; in general, all the great towns of China are much alike: there are crowds of people running about, and pushing against one another, but no public monuments, or anything to interest a traveller, such as he would find in Europe.

We quitted I-tchang-fou; however, as free men, without either handcuffs or chains on our feet; and we felt sure that they would not in any tribunal venture to make such a proposal in future, for fear of seeing their prisoners metamorphosed into unwelcome guests.

We continued our journey still down the river, as this was decidedly the most convenient, pleasant, and expeditious mode of travelling. On our way we passed another custom-house, but without being stopped. The officers were tranquilly smoking their pipes in front of it, and watched us passing without disturbing themselves. Master Ting said, that they had come to visit us before, because they had had information of there being contraband goods on board.

The custom-houses in the interior of China are not numerous, or at all severe in their proceedings. At the time when we had been in the same position as other missionaries travelling as native Chinese, and, consequently, subject to the same laws as any one else, we traversed the Empire from one end to the other, without having anywhere had our trunks searched, which contained European books, sacred ornaments, and many other prohibited articles. The officers of the customs used to present themselves; we declared that we were not merchants, and carried with us no contraband goods; we then offered our keys in a very calm and stately manner, and requested them to examine our trunks, which they never did. If they had been as rigid and active in the performance of their duty as those of France, for instance, the poor missionaries would not have been able to get off so well; but one can mostly extricate oneself from any difficulty of this kind in China by means of a small pecuniary offering.

The greater part of the custom-houses are established solely for salt, the trade in which, in most of the provinces, is a government monopoly. The Chinese make a great consumption of this article; their food is

full of it. In almost every family you find an abundant provision of herbs and of salt fish, as it is the ordinary food of the lower classes; and even those of a higher rank always have it served on their tables. It is with salt, also, that they correct the insipidity of their rice boiled in water. The Chinese are small eaters, and live on very little; we have always thought that, as salt is a nutritive substance, the quantity they take of it must supply the want of more food; but with this kind of diet it may be supposed they must be continually thirsty, and that accounts for their drinking tea at all hours of the day.

Since the last war with the English, the government has established a great number of custom-houses along the line that European goods have to follow to reach the interior of the Empire. The Chinese being forced to permit the trade which the English opened for themselves with their artillery, have no other way than this to oppose their invasion; and consequently the further their goods proceed into China, the heavier become the duties to which they are subjected. Too weak to repel force by force, and say we will have none of your merchandise, this is the only expedient they have been able to hit on, in order to protect the native industry.

We arrived early at *I-tou-hien*, a town of the third class, where we were received in a charming Communal Palace by a Mandarin no less charming. The first magistrate of I-tou-hien is, unquestionably, the most accomplished person we ever met among the Chinese functionaries.

He was quite a young man, somewhat weakly, with a pale face, apparently attenuated by study. He had obtained the degree of doctor in Pekin, when he was scarcely more than a child; and his gentle and spiritual-

looking countenance was rather set off than otherwise by a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles of European manufacture. His conversation, full of good sense, refinement, and modesty, was really delightful; and the exquisite politeness of his manners might have reconciled any one ever so averse to them, to the Chinese Rites. On our arrival we found a splendid collation of delicious fruit, laid out in a cool, fresh pavilion, in the midst of a garden shaded by large trees. Among the rarities of this rich dessert we remarked with pleasure cherries of a brilliant red colour, fine peaches, and other fruits that do not grow in the province of Hou-pé, and we could not help expressing our surprise at the circumstance. "How could you possibly procure such rare fruit?" said we to our amiable Mandarin.

"When one wishes to please friends," said he, "one always finds means to do so. The resources of the heart are inexhaustible."

We passed the whole day and part of the night in talking to this interesting Chinese. He had many questions to ask concerning the various nations of Europe; and he always made his inquiries in a serious, judicious manner, worthy of a man of high intelligence. He did not ask one of the puerile, silly questions to which his brother Mandarins had accustomed us so much. Geography appeared to be the subject that most interested him, and he had a great deal of very accurate knowledge concerning it. He surprised us very much by asking, whether the European governments had not yet realised the project of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez, so as to connect the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean; and we found him very well informed

concerning the extent and importance of the five parts of the world; and the space that China occupies upon the globe.

The Europeans are quite in error when they attribute to the Chinese a total ignorance of geography, because they find among them absurd maps, a kind of caricature of the earth, manufactured for the amusement of the lower classes; from these it has been concluded that even the studious men know no better. At all times the Chinese have given proofs of having great interest in geographical knowledge. It is very evident that with their present system of remaining at home, and refusing admittance to foreigners, it must be very difficult for them to acquire precise and circumstantial information concerning other countries, but much valuable knowledge may notwithstanding be found in their writings; and Klaproth has availed himself of the assistance of Chinese geographers, to throw a great deal of light on the geography of Asia in the middle ages. The recent important publication of M. Stanislas Julien, upon the travels of a Chinese in India in the sixth century, show how much there might be to learn in the works of men who could observe so well and describe what they had observed so faithfully.

We found in an Arab book entitled "The Chain of Chronicles," composed in the ninth century, a passage capable of giving a good idea of what was known in China at a time when European knowledge was exceedingly small. We will quote this fragment from the Arab writer, as it seems likely to interest the reader:—

"There was at Bassora a man of the tribe of Coreishites, called *Ibn-Vahab*, and who was descended from Habbar, the son of Al-Asvad. The town of

Bassora having been ruined, Ibn-Vahab quitted that country, and went to Siraf. At that time there was a ship just setting sail for China, and it occurred to Ibn-Vahab that in these circumstances he would embark in this ship. When he arrived in China, he wished to see the supreme king; and he therefore set out for Khom-dan*, and from the port of Khan-fou † to the capital is a journey of two months. He had to wait a long time at the Imperial gate, although he presented petitions in which he announced himself as being come of the same blood as the prophet of the Arabs. At length the Emperor placed a house at his disposal, and ordered that he should be provided with everything necessary; at the same time he charged the officer who represented him at Khan-fou to make inquiries about this man, and consult merchants concerning him who asserted himself to be of the family of the prophet of the Arabs, to whom may God be propitious! The governor of Khan-fou announced in his answer, that the pretensions of this man were well founded. Then the Emperor admitted him to his presence, and made him considerable presents, and he returned to Irak with what the Emperor had given him.

"This man had grown old, but he retained the use of his faculties. He related to us that when he was with the Emperor, that prince asked him many questions on the subject of the Arabs, and the means

* At present *Si-ngan-fou*, the capital of the province of *Ho-nan*, where was found the inscription of which we have spoken, and which really was, at this epoch, the residence of the Emperors of the dynasty of Tang.

† Khan-fou is a sea-port in the province of Tche-hiang. We once made the same journey as the Arab traveller, and took about the same time for it.

they had employed to overthrow the Empire of Persia. This man had replied, 'The Arabs have always been conquerors by the help of God, whose name be praised! because the Persians have been plunged in the idolatrous worship of the sun, the moon, and the fire, instead of the Creator. The Emperor said, 'The Arabs triumphed on that occasion over the noblest of empires, containing the most cultivated lands — the most abounding in riches — the most fertile in intelligent men, the country of him whose renown has extended farthest of all.' Then he continued, 'What is in your opinion the rank of the principal empires in the world?' The man replied that he was not able to give an opinion on such matters. Then the Emperor ordered the interpreter to say to him these words: 'We ourselves count five great sovereigns. The richest is he who reigns in Irak; that is situated in the middle of the world, and the other kings are placed around him. He bears among us the title of King of Kings. After this empire comes our own: the sovereign of which is named the King of Men; because there is no king who maintains better order in his states, or exercises better vigilance over them. Also there is no people more submissive to its prince than ours. We then are really the kings of men. Next comes the King of Wild Beasts, who is the King of the Turks, and whose states are contiguous to those of China. The fourth king in rank is the King of Elephants, that is to say the King of India. He is called among us also the King of Wisdom, because wisdom originated among the Indians. Lastly, there is the Emperor of the Romans, called among us the King of Fine Men, because there is not on the earth a

better-made race of men, nor with more handsome faces than the Romans. These are the principal kings. The others hold only a secondary rank.'

"The Emperor afterwards ordered the interpreter to say these words to the Arab: 'Would you recognise your master if you were to see him?' The Emperor meant the Apostle of God, to whom may God be merciful! I replied, 'And how should I see him, when he is now on high with God?' The Emperor replied, 'I did not mean that, I was speaking only of his face.' Then the Arab answered, 'Yes!' Immediately the Emperor had a box brought to him, and placing it before him, he took from it some pieces of paper and gave them to the interpreter, saying, 'Let him see his master.'

"I recognised on these pages the portraits of the prophets, and, at the same time, I repeated prayers for them, so that my lips moved.

"The Emperor did not know that I had recognised the prophets, and he asked the interpreter why I moved my lips. The interpreter asked me, and I answered, 'I was praying for the prophets.' The Emperor asked how I had known them, and I answered, 'By the attributes that distinguish them. Thus, there is Noah in his Ark, he who saved himself with his family when the Most High God commanded the waters, and all the earth with its inhabitants was submerged. Noah only with his family escaped the deluge. At these words the Emperor began to laugh, and said, 'You have guessed rightly, when you recognised Noah; but as to the submersion of the whole earth, that is what we do not believe. The deluge only covered a part of the earth; it did not reach either this country or India.' Ibn-Vahab reported, that he was afraid to refute what

the Emperor had said, or urge the arguments that he might have used, but which the prince would not have admitted. He resumed, however, saying, 'There is Moses and his rod, with the children of Israel.' 'That is true; but Moses showed himself on a very little theatre, and his people were not always well disposed towards him.' I then said, 'There is Jesus sitting upon an ass, and surrounded by the Apostles.' The Emperor said, 'He appeared only for a very short time: his mission did not last more than thirty months.'

"Ibn-Vahab continues thus to pass in review the different prophets; but we will confine ourselves to repeating a part of what he said to us. Ibn-Vahab added that above each prophet's face there was a long inscription, which he supposed to contain the name of the prophets, their country, and the circumstances that accompanied their mission. Afterwards he continued thus: 'I saw the face of the Prophet (upon whom be peace!); he was mounted on a camel, and his companions were also mounted on camels, placed around him. All wore on their feet Arab coverings; all had tooth-picks attached to their girdles. As I began to weep, the Emperor told the interpreter to ask me why I shed tears; I replied: "That is our Prophet our Lord, and my cousin. Peace be upon him!" the Emperor replied, "You have spoken truly. He and his people raised the most glorious of empires, only he was not to see with his own eyes the edifice he had founded. The edifice was only seen by those who came after him."

"I saw also a great many other pictures of prophets, some of whom were making a sign with their right hands, joining the thumb and the fore-finger; as if by this movement, they had wished to attest some truth.

Some were represented standing, and making a sign with their finger towards heaven. There were also others, whom the interpreter told me were prophets of India.

"Afterwards the Emperor interrogated me concerning the caliphs and their customs, as well as upon our religion, manners, and customs, and such things as I was capable of answering. Then he added, 'What in your opinion is the age of the world?' I replied, 'People are not agreed about that. Some say six thousand years, others more, but the difference is not great.'

"Thereupon the Emperor laughed very much, and the Vizier, who was standing near him, signified also that he was not of my opinion. The Emperor said, 'I do not think your prophet said that.' Then my tongue turned, and I said, 'Yes! he did say so.' Immediately I saw signs of disapprobation on the Emperor's countenance, and he charged the interpreter to transmit to me these words.

"'Pay attention to what you say. Men do not speak to kings till they have well weighed what they are going to say. You have affirmed that you are not all agreed upon this point; you are not then agreed upon what your prophet has asserted, and you do not accept all that your prophets have established. It is not right to be divided in such cases; on the contrary, such affirmations should be received without dispute.

"'Take care of that, and do not commit the same imprudence again.'

"The Emperor said many more things which have escaped my memory, on account of the length of time that has elapsed since. Afterwards he added, 'Why did you not go rather to your own sovereign, who, both

from his residence and his race, would suit you much better?' I replied: 'Bassora, my native place, was in desolation. I was at Siraf. I saw a ship going to set sail for China. I had heard of the splendour of the empire of China, and of the abundance of all things that are found in it. I wished to come to this country, and see it with my own eyes. Now I am about to return to my own country, to my sovereign, and my cousin, and I will speak to him of the splendour of this country, to which I have been a witness. I will speak to him of the vast extent of this country, of all the advantages I have enjoyed in it, of all the goodness that has been shown to me.' These words pleased the Emperor. He ordered that a rich present should be given to me, and that I should return to Khan-fou on post mules. He even wrote to the Governor of Khan-fou to recommend him to treat me well, to give me the preference over the officers of his government, and to provide me with everything I wanted up to the moment of my departure, and I lived in abundance and satisfaction until I left China.'

"We questioned Ibn-Vahab on the subject of the town of Khomdan, where the Emperor resided, and on the manner in which it was laid out. He spoke to us of the extent of the town, and of the number of the inhabitants. The town, he said, is divided into two parts, separated by a long broad street. The Emperor, the Vizier, the troops, the Cadi of Cadis, the eunuchs of the court, and all persons who belong to the government, occupy the right or eastern side. No person of the lower class is to be found there, nor anything like a market. The streets are traversed by rivulets, and bordered by trees, and they contain vast mansions.

"The part situated on the left, or west side, is destined

for the people, for merchants, shops, and markets. In the morning, at day-break, you see the stewards of the Imperial Palace, the servants of the court, of the generals and their agents, entering on foot and on horseback the part of the town where the shops and markets are; you see them buying all that is wanted by their masters, and after that they return to their own quarter, and you see nothing of them till the next morning.

"China possesses many agreeable things, delightful groves with rivers winding through them, but you never find the palm-tree."

In reading these accounts of the Arab travellers, it is easy to be seen that they have really been in China, and apart from the exaggerations inherent in the Oriental character, it is also easy to recognise the country of which they speak. There exhales, as it were, a certain odour of China from their writings, that cannot be mistaken. Strange that this people, so often overthrown by long and terrible revolutions, should still have preserved that peculiar stamp that will always distinguish them from every other.

The Chinese of the ninth century, of whom these Arabs speak, are certainly the same that Marco Polo found in the thirteenth, although they were then subject to the dominion of the Mongol Tartars. Three centuries later, when the Portuguese doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and again discovered China, they recognised the people whom the illustrious Venetian traveller had previously made known in Europe, and in our own days we may only be said to have renewed acquaintance with the same old Chinese that were discovered by the Arabs and Marco Polo.

CHAP. IX.

NAMES GIVEN BY THE CHINESE TO THE KINGDOMS OF EUROPE. — ORIGIN OF THE WORDS CHINA AND THE CHINESE. — EXPLANATION OF THE VARIOUS NAMES THAT THE CHINESE GIVE TO THEIR EMPIRE. — GOOD AND VENERABLE PREFECT OF SONG-TCHE-HIEN. — PORTRAIT OF THE ANCIENT MANDARINS. — HOLY INSTRUCTIONS OF THE EMPERORS. — A KHORASSANIAN OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. — DETAILS CONCERNING THE MANNERS OF THE ANCIENT CHINESE. — CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF THE CHINESE. — MEANS EMPLOYED BY THE MANTCHOO DYNASTY TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POWER. — FOREIGNERS NOT ALWAYS EXCLUDED FROM CHINA. — BAD POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT. — GENERAL PRESENTIMENT OF A REVOLUTION. — NAVIGATION ON THE BLUE RIVER. — TEMPEST. — LOSS OF PROVISIONS. — RUNNING AGROUND THREE TIMES. — SHIPWRECK. — THE SHIPWRECKED.

The young prefect of I-tou-hien, after having gathered with liveliest interest all the information we could give him concerning the different countries of Europe, bethought himself to ask us how we called his country in our language. When he heard that we gave it the name of *China*, and its inhabitants that of *Chinese*, he could hardly recover from his astonishment. He insisted upon knowing what these words meant, the sense attached to them, *why* the words China and Chinese should have been chosen to designate his country and his countrymen. "We," said he, "call the happy inhabitants of your illustrious country *Si-yang-jin*; now Si means West, yang sea, and jin man, so that the word means 'Men of the Western Seas,' that is, the general denomination,

To designate the several nations, we transcribe their names as faithfully as our characters will allow of. Thus we say *Fou-lang-sai*, that is to say *homme-faran-cais*. When we speak of the Westerns we sometimes seize on a striking trait of the people whom we wish to point out. Thus we call the *In-ki-li* (English) *Houng-mao-jin*, that is, 'Men of Red Hair,' because it is said they have hair of that colour; and we give to the *Ya-me-ly-kien* (Americans), the name of 'Men of the Gaudy Banner,' because it is said that they carry at the masts of their vessels a flag striped with various colours. You see that all these denominations have a sense, a meaning for the mind. That must be the case also with your words China and Chinese; since those words do not belong to our language, they must necessarily signify something in yours."

These expressions, very strange certainly in the ear of a Chinese, seemed to trouble our worthy magistrate so much, that to prevent him from imagining that they had any satirical and malevolent sense, we were obliged to enter on a little historical dissertation, and prove to him that these words did belong radically to the Chinese language; that it was the name they formerly gave themselves, but that we have altered it to suit our own mode of speech, as they out of *Francais* have made *Fou-lang-sai*.

It is, in fact, indisputable that these words do come from the country itself. The Chinese have always had the habit of designating their empire after the reigning dynasty. It is thus that in remote times they gave it the names of *Tang*, of *Yu*, and of *Hia*. The great exploits of the Emperor of the dynasty of Han, brought this name into use, and after that time the Chinese bore the

name of *Han-jin* or Men of Han, which is still common especially in the northern provinces.

The dynasty of *Thang* having distinguished itself still more by its conquests than that of Han, the name of *Thang-jin* was for several centuries in use to designate the Chinese. In our time China, being governed by the Mantchoo dynasty, which has adopted the title of *Thsing* "pure," the Chinese call themselves *Thsing-jin*, or men of Thsing, as they bore the name of *Ming-jin*, under the dynasty of *Ming*. It is precisely as if the French had taken successively the names of Carlovingians, Capetians, and Napoleonians, according to the dynasties that have reigned at different epochs in France.

The name of China, by which we designate this vast country, is in almost general use in Eastern Asia. We get it from the Malays, who call this Empire Tchina. The Malays became acquainted with the Chinese in the second half of the third century before our era, when the famous Emperor *Thsing-che-houang* subjected the southern part of China and Tonquin, and even carried his conquests as far as Cochin China.

The people of the Malay Islands, having direct relations with these countries, then met the Chinese, who bore at the time the name of Thsing, after the reigning dynasty. The Malays, not having precisely the letters required, pronounced the word Tchina, adding an *a* to it. The pilots and some of the sailors, who afterwards took the Portuguese ships into Chinese ports, were of Malay origin, and it was quite natural that the Portuguese should adopt the name that their guides gave to China. Thus the first Europeans called it Tchina, and this name was afterwards slightly modified, according to the language of the various nations who adopted it.

It is equally certain that the first relations of the Chinese with India date from the time of the Thsing dynasty. This name was changed by the Hindoos also into Tchina, for the same reason as among the Malays; and they substituted *tch* for *ths*. The Arabs received the word from India, and wrote it *Sin-Sina* to accommodate it to their language, and thence probably came the Latin *Sinæ-Sinenses*, used to designate the Chinese.

Although the Arab navigators, and the first Portuguese who went to India, had adopted the Sanscrit and Malay name of Tchina for Southern China, the northern part of this country not bearing the same name among the neighbouring nations, was also differently named in the West. Under the dynasty of Han, that is to say, in the two centuries before and after our era, the Chinese conquered all Central Asia, as far as the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. They established there military colonies, and their merchants traversed those countries to exchange their merchandise for other productions from Persia and the Roman Empire. They brought principally silk and tissues of that material, which found an excellent market in Persia and Europe. According to Greek authors, the word *ser* signifies the silk-worm, and the inhabitants of *Serica* the country from which the silk came. This fact shows that the name of *Seres* denoted the valuable article of trade that the Western nations obtained from them. In Armenia the insect that produces silk is called *chiram*, a name that has some resemblance to the *ser* of the Greeks. It is natural that these two words should have been borrowed from the Eastern nations, and that is what the Mongol and Mantchoo languages make it easy to demonstrate.

We may infer from this, that the names of silk, among the ancients and moderns, originated in the eastern part of Asia. Silk is called *sirk* among the Mongols, and *sirghe* by the Mantchoos. As these two nations inhabit the north and north-east of China, is it likely that they received these denominations from the people of the West? On the other hand, the Chinese word *see*, which signifies silk, has not only a resemblance to *sirk* and *sirghe*, but also still more to the *ser* of the Greeks. This analogy will appear so much the more striking, when we consider that in the Chinese language the letter *r* is not pronounced. The Corean word for silk is identical with that of the Greeks. Silk has then, it seems, given its name to the people who first fabricated it, and sent it to the West; and the Seres of the Greeks and Romans were evidently the Chinese*, whose Empire was formerly separated by the Oxus from that of Persia.

Among the different names that the Chinese give to their country, the most ancient and the most in use is that of *Tchoung-kouo*, that is to say, the Empire of the Centre. The Chinese historians relate that this denomination dates from the time of *Tching-wang*, the second Emperor of the dynasty of Tcheou, who reigned towards the end of the twelfth century before our era. At this epoch China was divided into several principalities, which all took the title of kingdoms. *Tcheou-koung*, uncle of the Emperor, gave to the town of *Lo-yang*, in

* "It would be curious," says Klaproth, who has furnished the greater part of these considerations on the different names of China, "to know at what period the word *silk* was introduced into the English language. It appears to be the same as the Russian *chelk*, which I believe to be derived from the Mongol *sirk*: this is so much the more likely as Russia was for a long period under the Mongolyoke."

what is now the province of *Ho-nan*, where the Chinese monarch resided, the name of Central Kingdom, because it was, in fact, situated in the midst of the other kingdoms of China. Since that time, the portion of the Empire possessed by the Emperors, or the whole of it, has borne this title. Such is the true and only origin of that denomination, which has been preserved to our own day; yet most of the European books that treat of China, jest about this name, and boldly infer from it, that the Chinese are completely ignorant of geography; whilst it would be nearer the truth to say, that we ourselves are ignorant of their traditions. "I have no need," says Klaproth in his Memoirs, "to refute the absurd idea of those who pretend that the Chinese believe their country to be situated in the middle of the world, and that it is for this reason they give it the name of the Central Kingdom." A sailor or a porter of Canton might, perhaps, give such an explanation; but it remains for the intelligence of the questioner to adopt or reject it.

The Chinese also give to their country the name of *Tchoung-hoa*, or, Flower of the Centre; of *Tien-chao*, the Celestial Empire, or Heaven's Empire; and of *Tien-hia*, the "Beneath the Heavens," or the world, as the Romans called their dominions *Orbis*.

Of course, we did not give our Mandarin all the details into which we have been now entering, or speak to him of the Greeks, the Romans, or even the Arabs; but we told him enough to make him understand why we call his countrymen the Chinese, and not *Tchoung-kouo-jin*, or Men of the Central Empire.

Our explanations satisfied him completely, and he appeared quite happy to see that the word Chinese was

not an abusive nickname, as he had been at first inclined to think.

We were at last obliged to take leave of this interesting doctor, and it was not without regret. Most gladly would we have remained another day, but the Rites were there to forbid it, and we could not show ouselves wanting in politeness towards a man who had treated us with so much delicate attention.

From I-tou-hien we went by land to Song-tche-hien, not a long stage, and by a tolerably agreeable road. We stopped at this last town on the recommendation of the young Prefect of I-tou-hien. He had informed us that we should find there one of his friends filling the office of first magistrate, with whom we should be well satisfied. He had had this Prefect informed of our arrival over night, and he must have written some wonderful things concerning us, for we were received with extraordinary pomp. A triumphal arch was erected at the gate of the Communal Palace ornamented with hangings of red silk and artificial flowers, glittering with tinsel, and gleaming with coloured lanterns. As soon as we had entered the first court we were welcomed by a noisy discharge of innumerable fireworks, which the guardians of the palace had been holding suspended by long strings at the end of bamboo canes. On the threshold of the saloon of reception stood awaiting us a worthy old gentleman still vigorous, who, on seeing us, appeared all sparkling with joy. This was the first magistrate, on whom so high a eulogium had been pronounced at I-tou-hien. Our presence put him apparently quite beside himself with joy. He clasped us in his arms, looked at us smilingly, went and came and gave orders to everybody, and then began again his little

salutations and caresses. At length he grew more calm, and we seated ourselves to take tea while awaiting the collation that he had given orders to serve to us. It was rather late, as we had arrived sooner than we had been expected.

This respectable magistrate had not the refinement of mind and the distinguished manners of his young colleague at I-tou-hien, but he appeared to us endowed with great penetration. His conversation was agreeable, and the absence of elegance in its forms was well compensated by a tone of frankness and good humour that suited his advanced age wonderfully well. We learned from his *sse-yé*, or privy counsellor, that he had sprung from a poor peasant family, and that his youth had been spent amidst labour and privation. He had passed the literary examinations with so much applause, that, notwithstanding the obscurity of his birth and his total want of patronage, he had obtained the degree of Bachelor, and subsequently, at Pekin, that of Doctor. Afterwards he had toiled painfully up the lower grades of the magistracy until, by merit alone, he had reached the office of Prefect of a town of the third order. To attain still higher dignities it would have been necessary to go to considerable expense, and make costly presents to ministers and persons influential at court. He could not, therefore, pretend to any higher employment, because he was poor, and he was poor because he would not fleece the people under his jurisdiction, and because he administered justice gratuitously, and shared his modest revenue with the poor of his district; but every one loved and blessed his rule.

As soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace we remarked that the people entered freely into all

parts of it, invading the courts, the gardens, the apartments, and even taking the liberty of entering the one where we were talking with the Prefect. Master Ting having made an observation that we did not like these tumultuous assemblies, "Let them come," said the Prefect, smiling and looking at us with an air of supplication; "pray do not send them away; they will not incommode you, they only want to see you. If you should find them troublesome, I need only make a sign to them and they will retire immediately."

We took very good care not to vex this good magistrate by having put in force at Song-tche-hien the strict orders that we had given in other places. On that day there was absolute free admission for all, and every one was at liberty to come and study as much as he pleased the physiognomies and appearance of the men of the Western Seas. Whilst the curious contemplated us with open mouths and staring eyes, the good Mandarin watched them with great delight, and we on our parts were greatly pleased to observe his good-natured face, and to be able to afford so much gratification to the public. Everything went off very peaceably, and without occasioning us the least trouble.

When one set had stared enough they retired, and made room for others, and if ever there occurred the least noise or disorder among them, their Prefect had but to say a word or make the slightest gesture of disapprobation, and they were all quiet in a moment; his smallest orders were obeyed in a manner at once respectful and filial.

The Prefect of Song-tche-hien, surrounded by his people, was the very image of a father in the midst of his children, the most touching realisation of the fun-

damental idea of the laws and institutions of China, which are always based on the principle of paternity, and which suppose that every functionary is a father to his people and they as children with respect to him. At present this magnificent system is only a vain theory, and, with some few rare exceptions, it is never found but in books; the Mandarins are scarcely anything else than a formidable association of little tyrants and great thieves, strongly organised for the pillage and oppression of the people. We repeat, however, that this disorder is not the necessary consequence of Chinese institutions; it is not inherent in the principle of the government, but, on the contrary, it is a flagrant violation of that principle.

In reading the annals of China we remarked that under certain dynasties the Mandarins were good magistrates, occupying themselves paternally with the interests of those confided to their care. They went out often to visit the people under their government; they inquired for themselves into the wants of the poor and the sufferings of the unfortunate, in order the better to succour them; they traversed the rural districts to examine the state of the harvests, to encourage the laborious farmers, and reprimand those who showed negligence in their work. If an inundation or any other public calamity took place, they hurried to the spot to investigate the evil and inquire into the remedy. On the first and the fifth day of each moon they gave instruction to the people who were eager to receive it, and especially they administered justice with strict impartiality. Every oppressed man, every one whose rights had been interfered with, might present himself at the tribunal; he had but to strike on a great cymbal,

placed expressly for that purpose in the interior court, and the Mandarin, as soon as he heard the sound, was obliged to appear and listen to the complainant at any hour of the day or night.

Now things are managed in a very different manner: there are indeed in all the localities places appointed where the Mandarins ought to instruct the people; they are called *Chan-yu-ting* or "Hall of Holy Instructions;" but on the appointed day the Mandarin does but just walk in, smoke a pipe, drink a cup of tea, and walk out again. Nobody is there to listen to him, and if there were he would not trouble himself to say a word. In the tribunals the "Cymbals of the Oppressed" are still to be seen; but the oppressed take good care not to strike upon them, for if they did they would be immediately fined or whipped.

The conduct formerly observed by the Mandarins towards the inhabitants of a district was only a repetition, on a small scale, of that of the Emperor towards his subjects. It has always been a custom with the Chinese sovereigns to publish from time to time instructions to their subjects on morals, agriculture, and industry. This practice dates from the most remote times of the monarchy. The Emperor of China is not only the supreme head of the state, the great sacrificer or high priest, and principal legislator of the nation, he is also the chief of the Literary aristocracy, and the first doctor in the empire; he is not less bound to instruct than to govern his subjects, or rather governing and instructing ought to be in his empire the same thing. All decrees are instructions; orders are given under the form of lessons, and bear that name; chastisements and punishments are the complement of the

lesson; the Emperor is regarded strictly as a father whose duty it is to teach his children, and who is compelled sometimes to chastise them.

The chan-yu, or holy edicts, emanating from the Imperial pen for the instruction of the people, are ordered to be read and explained, on the first and the fifteenth day of every month, with great state, and according to the ceremonial that regulates these solemnities. In every town or village, the civil and military authorities, attired in their state costume, assemble in a public hall; the master of the ceremonies, a personage always indispensable in Chinese meetings, cries in a loud voice to all present, to file off according to their rank; and he warns every one not to fail to perform before a tablet, inscribed with the sacred names of the Emperor, the three genuflexions, and nine knockings of the head. This ceremony over, they pass into the hall, named chan-yu-ting, where the people and the soldiers standing in silence, the master of the ceremonies says, "Begin with respect." The magistrate, who has the office of reader, then advances towards an altar, on which perfumes are placed, kneels down, and takes, with every demonstration of respect, the tablet, on which is written the maxim that has been chosen for the explanation of the day, and then mounts upon the platform.

An old man receives the tablet, and places it on the platform opposite to the people; then commanding silence with a little wooden instrument in the form of a bell, he reads the sentence in a loud voice. Afterwards the master of the ceremonies cries, "Explain that sentence of the Holy Edict;" and the orator rises, and explains the sense of the maxim, which usually turns on some commonplace of the moral books of the Chinese.

This custom, if seriously carried out, can only be laudable and useful, but as it is done now, it is merely a vain ceremony. The case is the same with the celebrated festival in which, in the first days of spring, the Emperor goes with all his court into the country to cultivate a field himself, by way of encouraging agriculture; and every Mandarin is required to repeat the same ceremony in his district. It is indisputable that these fine institutions had formerly great influence, when they were seriously carried out by the Mandarins and the people. We could bring a crowd of examples, drawn from the annals of China, to give an idea of what this nation was in times past; but we prefer leaving the already quoted Arab author to speak, since his testimony will be less suspected than that of a Chinese writer.

"A man who was a native of Khorassan, had come from Irak, and bought there a great quantity of merchandise; then he embarked for China. This man was very avaricious and selfish, and there arose a dispute between him and the eunuch whom the Emperor had sent to Khan-fou, the rendezvous of the Arab merchant, to choose amongst the merchandise newly arrived, whatever should be suitable for him. This eunuch was one of the most powerful men in the empire; it was he who kept the treasures and riches of the Emperor. The dispute took place on the subject of an assortment of ivory and other merchandise, the merchant refusing to yield his goods at the price offered; the discussion grew warm, and at last the eunuch carried his audacity so far as to put aside what was best among the merchandise, and to seize upon it by force, without troubling himself at all about the claims of the proprietor.

"The merchant set off secretly from Khan-fou, and went to Khom-dan, the capital of the empire, two months' journey or more, taking his way to China, already mentioned.

"The custom is, that he who rings the bell over the head of the king * should be conducted immediately ten days' journey off, to a kind of exile. There he is kept in prison for two months, and then the governor of the place sends for him and says:—'You have taken a step, which, if your claim is not well founded, will bring on you ruin and loss of life; the Emperor has established for you, and persons of your class, viziers and governors of whom you may, when you please, ask justice. Know that if you persist in addressing yourself directly to the Emperor, and that your complaints should not be found to be such as to justify such a step, nothing can save you from death.

"'It is good that every man who should be inclined to do as you have done, should be deterred from following your example. Desist then from your claim, and return to your proper business.' When a man in such a case withdraws his complaint, they give him fifty blows with a stick and send him back to the country whence he came, but if he persist, he must be conducted into the presence of the Emperor. All this was done with the Khorassanian, but he persisted in his complaint, and still asked to speak to the Emperor. He was, therefore, brought back to the capital, and taken before the Prince, and the interpreter questioned him as to

* The Emperor has in his palace a bell for the use of the oppressed who claim his protection, but it is now as much off duty as the cymbal of the Mandarins.

the purpose he had in view in what he had done. The merchant then related how a dispute had arisen between him and the eunuch, and how the eunuch had taken his goods from him by force. The affair, he said, had made a noise in Khan-fou, and had become public.

"The Emperor ordered that the Khorassanian should be again put in prison, but that he should be provided with everything he required to eat and drink; at the same time he wrote by the Vizier and his agents to Khan-fou, to desire them to obtain information concerning the merchant's story, and endeavour to discover the truth.

"The same orders were given to the Master of the left, the Master of the right, and the Master of the centre, the three persons on whom, after the Vizier, the command of the army depends; it is to them the Emperor entrusts the guardianship of his person, and when that prince goes to war, or on similar occasions, each of the three takes the place that his title indicates.

"These three functionaries therefore wrote to their subordinate officers.

"All the information they received tended to justify the recital of the Khorassanian, and letters to the same effect came from various parts of the empire. Then the sovereign sent for the eunuch, and as soon as he arrived, his goods were confiscated, and the Emperor withdrew from his hands the treasure that had been entrusted to him. At the same time he said, 'You would well deserve that I should put you to death. You have exposed me to the censure of a man who came from Khorassan on the frontiers of my empire, who has visited the country of the Arabs, after that, the countries of India, and lastly my states, in the hope

of enjoying my benefits. You would then, that this man, in returning to these countries, and revisiting the same nations, should say, "I have been the victim of injustice in China, and they have stolen my goods." I will refrain from shedding your blood, in consideration of your former services, but I shall appoint you to be the guardian of the dead, since you have not respected the interests of the living.' By the order of the Emperor, this eunuch was then charged to watch over the royal tombs, and to keep them in good order.

"One of the proofs of the admirable order that reigned formerly in the empire, and the great difference there is at present*, is the manner in which the judicial decisions were given, the respect for the law which animated all hearts, and the anxiety shown by the government for the administration of justice and in the choice of persons who had given sufficient proofs in the legislation, of sincere zeal, an invincible love of truth, a firm resolution not to yield what was right for the sake of persons of importance, and a most scrupulous regard to the rights of property of the weak, which might fallinto their hands.

"When the Cadi of Cadis was to be appointed, the government, before investing him with the office, sent him into all the cities, which by their importance are regarded as the pillars of the empire. He remained in each city one or two months, and made inquiries into the state of the country, its customs, and the disposition of the inhabitants. He inquired after persons on whose testimony he could rely to such a degree, that when they had spoken, it was useless to seek for more information. When this man had visited the

* At this epoch the empire was in a state of revolution.

principal towns of the empire, and that there remained no considerable place where he had not sojourned, he returned to the capital, and they put him in possession of his office.

"This was the Cadi of Cadis, who chose and governed his subordinates. His knowledge of the different provinces of the empire, and of the persons who in each district were worthy of being charged with judicial functions, whether they were natives of the country or not, was a well-grounded knowledge, which made it unnecessary for him to have recourse to the recommendations of people who, perhaps, might have had partialities, and have replied in a manner contrary to the truth. There was no cause to fear that any Cadi would venture to write to his superior things whose falsehood he would immediately have detected, and would then have dismissed his informant.

"Every day a crier proclaimed at the door of the Cadi these words, 'Is there any one who has any complaint to make, whether against the Emperor, whose person is withdrawn from the sight of his subjects, or against any of his officers, or agents, or his subjects in general? For these things I stand in the place of the Emperor, in virtue of the powers he has conferred upon me.' The crier repeated these words three times. It is an established principle that the Emperor does not disturb himself from his occupations, unless some governor has been guilty of evident iniquity, or that the supreme magistrate has neglected to administer justice, and to watch over the persons confided to his care. Now as long as he keeps himself from these two things,—that is to say, as long as the decisions given at his tribunals are conformable to equity, and that the

functions of the magistracy are confided to persons who are friends of justice, the Empire is maintained in the most satisfactory state."— *Chain of Chronicles*, p. 106.

This last observation of the Arab writer is still applicable to China at the present day. It is because the magistracy is no longer confided to persons who are friends of justice, that this empire, once so flourishing and so well governed, is sinking rapidly to decay, and advancing towards certain, and perhaps speedy, destruction.

In seeking for the causes of this general disorganisation, of this corruption that has obviously penetrated into every stratum of Chinese society, and is working its ruin, it seems that we find it partly in a very important modification of the ancient system of government, which was introduced by the Mantchoo dynasty. It decreed, namely, that no Mandarin should hold office in the same place more than three years; and that no one should be appointed in his own province. The motive that dictated such a law may easily be guessed.

As soon as the Mantchoo Tartars saw themselves masters of the empire, they were terrified at their small number;—lost as they were in some measure in the midst of the countless multitude of Chinese, they must have asked themselves what means they had of governing this immense nation, naturally hostile to a foreign dominion.

To fill all public offices with Mandarins chosen from amongst the Tartars would not have been sufficient; and it would also have been no very good method of pacifying the minds of a people so jealous, and so convinced of their own merit. It was, therefore, decided that the vanquished party should not be excluded from public functions; but the offices of the Supreme Courts of Pekin were doubled, and divided between the Tartars

and Chinese. These latter had in great part the administration of the provinces, with the exception, however, of the first military Mandarinates and the command of the fortified places, which were reserved for the Tartars.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, it was still difficult for the conquering nation to consolidate its power, and it was in constant fear of conspiracy. There could not but be among the high officers some partisans of the fallen dynasty; and the authority which they enjoyed in the provinces must give them great influence in any attempt to raise the people. It was easy for them to weave plots, and have an understanding with those under their authority to undermine and finally overthrow the new government. It is, therefore, probable that it was with the view of paralysing these attempts at counter revolution, that it was determined that no one should be a Mandarin in his own country; and that no magistrate should exercise his functions more than three years in the same place.

The Mantchoo dynasty did not fail, of course, to colour this innovation with specious pretexts, relating to the public advantage and its solicitude for the welfare of the people, and forgot not to allege that the magistrates being far from their relations and friends, would be more free to devote themselves entirely to their functions and the interests of the country.

Such were the motives publicly avowed to render this alteration in the institutions of the empire acceptable; but in fact the object was to hinder influential men from taking root anywhere, and creating themselves partisans.

The conquerors of China have perfectly succeeded in this object for the space of two hundred years. As the great Chinese Mandarins have been always wandering from province to province, without being able to fix

themselves anywhere, all concert between them has become impossible; and as the heads of parties,—the representatives of Chinese nationality, could never rely upon agents whose authority was but temporary, conspiracies among them were easily crushed. This policy, judicious perhaps for the consolidation of a rising power, could not fail to be in the end a source of disorder. In making into a law of the empire what ought to have been a mere transitory expedient, the imprudent conquerors of China deposited in the very root of their power a poisonous germ, that has developed itself gradually, and borne fatal fruits.

The magistrates and public functionaries, having only a few years to pass at the same post, live in it like strangers, without troubling themselves at all about the wants of the people under their care; no tie attaches them to the population; all their care is to accumulate as much money as possible wherever they go, and continually repeat the operation, till they can return to their native province to enjoy a fortune gained by extortion in all the rest. It is in vain to cry out against their injustice and their depredations; it matters little to them what is thought of them, they are only birds of passage; the next day they may be at the other extremity of the empire, and will hear no more of the cries of the victims they have despoiled.

The Mandarins have thus become utterly selfish, and indifferent to the public good. The fundamental principle of the Chinese monarchy has been destroyed; for the magistrate is no longer a father living in the midst of his children, he is a marauder who comes one knows not whence, and who is going one knows not whither. Thus since the accession of the Mantchoo Tartar dynasty

everything in the empire has fallen into a languishing and expiring condition. You see no more of those great enterprises, those gigantic works, which are indicative of a powerful and energetic life in the nation that executes them.

You find in the provinces monuments that must have required incredible efforts and perseverance: numerous canals, lofty towers, superb bridges, grand roads over mountains, strong dykes along rivers, &c. But now, not only is nothing of the kind ever undertaken, but even what has been done under former dynasties is suffered to go to ruin.

Man, especially if he be not a Christian, can seldom free himself from his selfishness; he likes to enjoy the fruits of his labour himself, and seldom lays the foundation of an edifice but in the hope of seeing its completion. "Why," might one of these Mandarins of passage say to himself, "should I undertake what I shall never have time to finish? Why sow, for another to reap the harvest?" And with these views, the interests, moral and physical, of the population, are entirely abandoned. There are, we doubt not, governors of provinces, and prefects of towns, capable of effecting useful reforms, of creating beneficial institutions, and executing works often much wanted; but considering that they are only there for a day, they have not courage to put their hand to the work; egotism and private interest easily gain the upper place in their thoughts; they occupy themselves exclusively with their private affairs, leaving the interests of the public to be looked after by their successors, who in their turn leave it to those who may come after them.

This system, supposed to be established with the

object of withdrawing the Mandarins from private and family influence, and rendering their administration more free and independent, has had the very opposite effect. The functionaries succeed each other so rapidly in the various localities, that they are never acquainted with the affairs submitted to their administration; and often enough they even find themselves flung into the midst of a population whose very language they do not understand. They are often unacquainted with the manners and customs of the country; for it would be a great mistake to suppose that the Chinese are all alike. The difference is, perhaps, more strongly marked between the various provinces of China, than between many separate kingdoms of Europe. When the magistrates arrive at their Mandarinate, they find, fixed at their posts, the interpreters and subaltern functionaries, who, as they know all about the affairs of the locality, can easily render their services indispensable. In the smallest circumstances, the magistrates would be incapable of acting without the help of these agents, who are, in fact, the real governors.

The papers relating to all the lawsuits are in their hands; they alone draw them up, and settle beforehand the tenor of the judgment to be given. The magistrate has only to promulgate in public what they have arranged in private, and without his participation. Now, all these immovable factotums are on the spot; they have with them their relations and friends; and it is therefore not at all surprising that judicial and administrative affairs are conducted chiefly through intrigue and cabal. The tribunals are full of these vampires, incessantly occupied in draining away the substance of the people, first, for the Mandarins, and then on their own account and that of their friends. We have often been brought

into relation with these gentry; we have seen them at their dirty work, and we can hardly say whether the sight inspired most indignation or disgust.

Thus it appears, that since the accession of the Mantchoo dynasty, Chinese society has undergone great alteration for the worse.

In Europe, people have strong ideas of the immobility of this people. These innovations, introduced by the conquering race, are regarded as customs dating from the most remote antiquity, and necessarily resulting from the Chinese character. Who, for instance, is not convinced that this people has a natural antipathy to foreigners, and has always endeavoured to keep them away from its frontiers? Yet nothing can be more incorrect. This exclusive and jealous spirit belongs particularly to the Mantchoo Tartars; and it is only since the commencement of their rule that the empire has been hermetically sealed to foreigners.

In past ages the Chinese kept up constant relations with all the countries of Asia. Arabs, Persians, Indians traded in their ports without any hindrance; they even penetrated into the interior, and freely traversed the provinces. That Khorassanian, and that Arab who journeyed in peace to the capital of the empire to demand an audience of the Emperor, are in themselves a proof of this. The monument of *Si-ngan-fou* (the inscription on which we have mentioned) testifies that foreign missionaries had then preached and practised the Christian religion in all freedom. In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo was, with his father and his uncle, very well received in China at two different epochs. Although Venetians, they exercised there public functions of the highest importance, Marco Polo having been made governor of a province. About the same epoch, an

archbishop existed at Pekin, and Christian religious ceremonies were publicly performed. Towards the end of the first Chinese dynasty, when Father Ricci and the first Jesuit missionaries recommenced their labours, it does not appear that they had to contend with the same difficulties as at the present day; they were honourably received at court, and the first Tartar Emperors only tolerated what they found already existing.

All this proves that the Chinese have not always had such a great aversion to foreigners as is imagined. Many Mandarins, with whom we have had occasion to discuss this question, and to whom we have endeavoured to show how anti-social and insulting to other nations the Chinese policy was, have declared to us that the real Chinese had never repulsed foreigners, and that all the severe measures taken against them date only from the commencement of the present dynasty.

The Mantchoos, it is evident, were, on account of the smallness of their numbers in the midst of this vast empire, compelled to adopt stringent measures to preserve their conquest. For fear that foreigners should be tempted to snatch their prey from them, they have carefully closed the ports of China against them, thinking thus to secure themselves from ambitious attempts from without; and in the interior of the empire they have sought to keep their enemies divided by their system of rapid and constant change of public officers. These two methods have been crowned with success up to the present time; and it is really an astonishing fact, and one, perhaps, not sufficiently considered, that a mere handful of nomades should have been able to exercise, for more than two hundred years, a peaceable and absolute dominion over the vastest empire in the world, and over a population which, whatever may be

the common opinion respecting them, are really extremely stirring and fond of change. A policy, at the same time adroit, supple, and vigorous, could alone have obtained a similar result; but there is every reason to think that the methods which once contributed to establish the power of the Mantchoo Tartars will ultimately tend to overthrow it.

These strangers—these barbarians whom the government of Pekin appears to despise because it dreads them—will sooner or later grow impatient at seeing its gates obstinately closed against them; and some fine day they will burst them open, and find behind them a population, countless, it is true, but disunited, without any cohesive force, and at the mercy of any one strong enough to seize them, wholly or in part.

The venerable Mandarin of Song-tche-hien, that "fine old Chinese gentleman," uttered many lamentations over the decay of his country. "Since the sacred traditions of our ancestors," said he, "have fallen into oblivion, heaven has abandoned us. Those who watch attentively the march and the progress of events, those who observe how great is the selfishness of our magistrates, how profound the degradation of the people, feel a dark and mournful presentiment. We are on the eve of an immense revolution—this is felt by numbers; but will the impulse come from without or from within? No one knows—no one can foresee. One thing is certain; this dynasty has lost the divine protection, and the people have now only feelings of contempt and anger for those who govern them. Filial piety exists no longer amongst us, and the Empire must fall."*

* It is to be observed that these Recollections were written in 1849 from notes collected during 1846.

The Mandarin who talked in this way was, it is true, of a very advanced age, and consequently we were not surprised to find him somewhat inclined to grumbling and taking a sombre view of things. Horace's old man is a cosmopolite. The young and fascinating prefect of I-tou-hien saw the evil, we doubt not, as clearly as his respectable friend of Song-tche-hien, but he did not despair, or think that the Chinese nation had arrived at the end of its career. He remarked, indeed, that all was out of order; there was not a wheel in the state machine that did not grind; but he loved the machine, he thought it well and learnedly put together, and that it might be possible to make it do its work for centuries longer. But for this a wise and skilful mechanician was indispensable. Upon this last point, however, he was very reserved, and evidently did not say all that he thought: his position as a high government officer demanded great prudence, and we took good care not to press him on a question of so much delicacy; however, he said enough for us to suspect that the fall of the Tartar dynasty would not altogether break his heart. He seemed to think it quite reasonable and natural that the Chinese nation should be governed by a Chinese Emperor, and several Mandarins have expressed the same feeling in our presence, but it does not exist among the masses, who, as we said, think it very absurd to occupy yourself gratuitously with political questions. Such a feeling may, however, exist in a latent state, and, to awaken it, there needs only an event—an opportunity, such as has occurred at several of the most celebrated epochs in the history of China.

The Prefect of Song-tche-hien, a great admirer of antiquity, studied to fulfil towards us the duties of hospi-

tality, in a manner truly patriarchal. We were not merely for him travellers and strangers, whom it was necessary to take care of, because the law and the Viceroy of Sse-tchouen had ordered it. We were his guests in the full force of the term, and not only his guests, but also the guests of his friends — of his colleagues in the civil and military administration; the guests, in fact, of all the inhabitants of Song-tche-hien. We were, of course, obliged to show ourselves sensible to these friendly demonstrations, and live in some measure in public. The utmost privacy we could obtain was only just what was sufficient for repose and prayer. The Prefect would leave to no one else the care of arranging our departure. He went himself to the port to choose our boats, and he hired a third for his chief secretary and some domestics, who were to accompany us as far as Kin-tcheou, where we were to stop. He had also shown us the attention of sending his cook on board with a rich assortment of provisions, in order to continue his generous hospitality as long as he could.

We quitted Song-tche-hien very early in the morning. As the greater part of the night had been spent in gossiping, we felt as soon as we came on board that a small appendix to the very limited portion of sleep we had been permitted to take would be very acceptable. A good breeze diffused a refreshing coolness over the deck. Our servant made our travelling bed under a great sail, and we fell asleep very comfortably, lulled by the sound of the waves, as they dashed against the junk. During nearly an hour we enjoyed this delightful repose, but after this the post became untenable. The breeze continuing to freshen, the vessel acquired an uneasy jerking motion — sometimes to the right, sometimes to

the left; and as the horizontal position became extremely difficult to keep, we rose and tried how we could maintain the vertical one. The river, already at this part of Hou-pé, is a league wide, and presented a magnificent aspect to the eye; but one not altogether satisfactory for our navigation, as the wind was blowing with extreme violence, and the movement of the junk was very disagreeable.

We went below, and found, as usual, our dear Mandarins lying side by side on mats, and smoking their accursed opium. As soon as we appeared, they extinguished their little lamps. "It seems," said we, "that opium is food enough for you — no one appears to be thinking of dinner; but we must do honour to the provisions sent us by the kind Prefect of Song-tche-hien." At these words, very simple and natural, we thought, as it was late, and we had as yet taken nothing, our Mandarins looked completely bewildered. No one answered a word. "When it is convenient," said we, "will you give orders to the servants? It will not do to put it off too long, the wind is still increasing, the junk will soon be shaken so that it will be impossible to keep our feet."

Master Ting cast on us a compassionate look; he half opened his mouth, but no words came out. We saw that something vexatious had happened, but we could not guess what. At length, collecting all his energies, he burst out in a despairing tone, with "what shall we do, we have no victuals! The junk that carries the Prefect's provisions is far on before us — perhaps we shall overtake it. If you like, we will amuse ourselves in the meantime with taking tea; that will give us something to do." The kind of recreation that our ingenious

conductor proposed to us was, certainly, a very innocent one; but we knew from long experience, that it is not very strengthening for the stomach. To amuse one's-self by drinking tea, when one is exceedingly hungry, is absolutely to open a gulf instead of filling one up.

We came up on deck again, rather disappointed, and looked over the vast surface of the river, in hopes of discovering the bark that bore our cook and his accessories. A large yellow flag, we were told, floated at the mast, by which we should know the vessel. We looked, however, in vain. We saw many trading junks with their large mat sails, driven by the wind and tossed by the waves; but vainly on every side did we look for our provisions;—there was nothing for it but resignation, nobody was to blame. The place had, indeed, been mentioned where the other junk was to have waited for us; but, very likely, the violence of the wind had not permitted it to stop. Probably, we said, we saw those provisions embarked with too lively a feeling of satisfaction, and this disappointment has been permitted to give us a lesson.

We went below again to preach patience and resignation to our staff; but we were followed by the master of the boat, who, seeing our distress, had the kindness to offer us a ration of the rice that was boiling in the great kettle belonging to the crew. We accepted his offer with gratitude, and were soon dining on rice boiled in water and seasoned with salt herbs. This was of course not very dainty fare, but we had had worse. Whilst we were performing thus an instrumental piece in the rice bowl with our little chopsticks, we had the wisdom to call to our minds the epoch when, in traversing the deserts of Tartary and the mountains of Thibet, we had

no other food than some handfuls of barley flour, moistened with a little tea, or flavoured with suet.

"Heavens!" said we, "if we had every day found such a dinner as this under our tent! Fine white rice, well boiled and abundant in quantity, besides a plate of salt herbs, and preserved red pepper! Why, such a feast would have seemed a miracle! How Samdadchiemba's large face would have expanded at the sight of such a store of food. What fine stories he would have told us over it!"

The recollection of the incredible repasts prepared for us in those days by our dear camel driver, was an excellent seasoning, and gave us quite an appetite to our present fare. We did not dine so well certainly as many persons in the world, but assuredly better than a number of unfortunate people who did not dine at all. Our estimate of our welfare here below mostly depends upon comparison. How many people live in constant suffering and distress, because they persist in always looking above, instead of below them!

Dinners past and present, however, and even Tartary and Thibet, were forgotten not long afterwards, in cares of a different kind. During the whole morning the wind had been constantly increasing, and towards noon it came on to blow so violently, that we had to take in nearly all the sail, and keep only what was just necessary to steady the junk. The river was like a great arm of the sea lashed by a gale. The waves, though shorter and lower than in the open sea, were more impetuous, and dashed furiously against each other. Our poor junk rolling and pitching, at the same time groaned and creaked in every plank. Sometimes she seemed to be lifted high above the water, then plunged heavily down

into the midst of it. We were driven about by sudden and violent gusts, occasioned by the inequalities of the shore, and now and then we were within a hair's breadth of destruction, for the poor junk, almost on her beam ends, seemed, as she trembled and shook all over, to be hollowing out a tomb for herself in the waters. The position was critical; but the chief danger arose from the want of solidity in our vessel, as, like most of the river junks, it was of very imperfect construction. The sailors appeared, nevertheless, quite easy, and we preferred attributing their calmness to their experience rather than to their indifference.

Whilst we were thus driven at the mercy of the winds and waves, (but under the care of God,) our Mandarins had taken refuge in a narrow cabin, where they cowered down without daring to move. We did not at all perceive on the faces of our two military gentlemen the haughty dignity that is proper to a soldier in a moment of danger. That Master Ting should want it was excusable: his quality of literary man gave him the right to be afraid. The fact was, all our conductors were affected by sea-sickness; and as they had never felt it before, nor even heard it mentioned, they all thought they were going to die. It was in vain we assured them it was a mere momentary inconvenience, occasioned by the motion of the vessel, they persisted in believing it was all over with them. "And you two," said Master Ting, with a faint voice, "does not the vessel move for you as well as for us, and you are not ill." "Oh, that's a different case," said we, "we don't smoke opium."

"What! do you think it is the opium that is killing us?"

"Who knows? We could not venture to say that, but it is certain that opium is a poison, and that by degrees it must destroy the energy of the constitution in all smokers." Thereupon Master Ting began to curse the day when he had allowed himself to yield to the temptation of this detestable drug, and promised, that if he escaped with his life this time, he would throw pipe, lamp, and opium overboard. "Why not do it now," said we, "what's the use of waiting?"

"Oh, I am too ill now, I have not strength to move." "Well, we are not at all ill, we can see to this little matter for you," and we turned towards the place where he kept his smoking tools: but Master Ting was there before us. Suddenly awakened from his lethargy, he had made but one bound to the spot where his beloved casket was placed. The movement had been so nimble, and so totally unexpected, that his companions could not help laughing, though they were certainly not at all in the humour for it; and leaving him brooding over his treasure, we returned to the deck to see how we were getting on.

The water was less rough, and the breeze less violent; and though there was scarcely any sail set, the junk was moving swiftly on. "If this lasts," said the master, "we shall be soon at Kin-tchéou." And glad we were to hear him say so, for the weather looked ugly, and we wished very much to be in port again. But alas! though the distance was small, we were still far off the port.

Towards four in the afternoon, we reached a point where the river makes a bend in another direction, and instead of continuing its course to the south, turns abruptly to the west. At this point we met several

junks that were tacking to get through the difficult passage, where the side wind became a contrary one. Here we saw the two other boats of our flotilla, those containing the soldiers, and the provisions; they had probably been there a long time before us, but had not been able to get any further. We began now to perform in our turn the same manœuvres as the other junks, crossing the river from one side to the other. But it was in vain we sailed quite close to the wind, as the sailors say, and that our junk lay almost on her side, we could not succeed; we were continually driven back, and had to go through the same work all over again.

For those who are quiet on shore the sight of such manœuvres is very attractive; we contemplate with interest every movement of the vessel, we follow her progress with anxiety, we calculate her rate of motion, and consider what she will have to do under certain circumstances. When there are several vessels engaged in the same way, we compare their relative speed in sailing, their difference of build, and of behaviour; and there is mostly some one in which we are, in spite of ourselves, particularly interested. If she excels the rest, we are quite pleased, and as proud as if we had a share in her merit.

But, to enjoy all this, one must be on shore quite at one's ease, and perhaps smoking a pipe; for those on board it is quite a different affair, and not at all amusing. The first and even the second time the manœuvres have to be repeated, one can keep one's patience tolerably well, but then one begins to get tired; and when the weather is bad, and the navigation dangerous,—when you go on tacking and tacking, without ever advancing

a step—you really are in danger of losing your temper; at least, if you are so unfortunate as not to be able always to resign yourself to the will of God, in small as well as in great things.

We had been more than an hour thus tacking about, without any one of the vessels being able to pass the point in question; but at last, though the gale had increased, some of the junks did succeed in doubling the headland, and disappeared.

We thought then that our turn was coming, but we were mistaken; backwards and forwards we went, always in the same track, until all at once a sudden gust seized us, and threw us, not past the point, but on the opposite shore, which, fortunately, was only sand and mud, so that the junk was not broken; and after the crew had vociferated for a long time, they endeavoured to get her afloat again. Every one set to work, sailors, Mandarins, and missionaries, and with much toil, in the sweat of our brow, we got her out of the sand, and re-commenced our hopeless manœuvres. This time we did not even get as far as before, and presently the wind caught us again, and flung us once more on the shore we had just left.

Prudence now certainly required that we should refrain for the present from making any new attempt. We tried to convince the master that he would run the risk of losing his junk, as well as drowning us, which would be an unpleasant incident for both parties. Even supposing that we did manage to get round the point, should we be much better off with the foul wind we should find on the other side? We were of opinion, therefore, that it would be best to wait in patience for a more favourable opportunity. The vanity of our

master, however, prevented him from adopting this prudent resolution. He could not bear the idea that all the other junks had passed, and that he should be the only one left behind. He made a horrible noise on board, cursed the sailors, swore at winds and waves, and heaven and earth, and was in a perfect fury. Go on he would, or try to go on, let the wind blow as it might; so away went the poor junk, tacking to this side and that again, and struggling to do what was impossible, till we were, for the third time, dashed ashore on the sands.

The master was now at his wit's end, and, rather overpowered than resigned, he gave it up. It was almost dark too, and it would have been madness to endeavour to reach Kin-tcheou that night, with winds and waves against us. Instead, therefore, of forcing back the boat into the channel of the river, they plunged her still farther into the sand, in order to withdraw her from the action of the waves, which were dashing against her side with a fury that threatened every moment to break her to pieces.

When this operation was over, the junk was lashed to some neighbouring trees, by means of strong bamboo cables; the anchors were driven firmly into the ground; in short, all precautions were used to prevent her being carried away again. After this every body tried to settle himself as well as he could for the night. There was neither town nor hamlet near the spot where we had gone aground; we could only perceive a farm or two scattered about, where we could not hope to pass the night any more comfortably than in our own boat.

Our dinner, as it may be remembered, had not been

very sumptuous, but circumstances were now far more unfavourable to us, than they had been at dinner-time. We augured, therefore, that we should sup much worse, and we were by no means deceived in our expectations. We had neither a great pyramid of rice, nor salt herbs, nor red pepper. On leaving Song-tche-hien the crew had only provided for a day's voyage; they had not, indeed, made a very close calculation, and had provided abundantly for their number, but they could not have supposed they would have so large a party, or that our provisions would be likely to fail. There could not, therefore, be much food of any kind on board, and on inspection of the rice sack, it appeared that there was not enough to afford a meal for the crew, who, after the fatigue and trouble they had undergone, must have been greatly in need of it.

These worthy fellows, nevertheless, generously offered us a part of what there was, but we could not think of taking it; the rice that these poor people wanted would certainly have done us no good, if we had eaten it. We had made up our minds, therefore, resignedly, to go to bed without supper, when Master Ting came to whisper to us that there was a cargo of pumpkins on board in the hold. The master, on being interrogated, admitted the fact, and said, that as Long-tche-hien produced enormous pumpkins, one of his friends had commissioned him to bring a quantity to the market at Kin-tcheou. We proposed to him to buy them all; the bargain was quickly concluded, and the cargo passed immediately from the hold to the kitchen. We had them boiled in large slices in the kettle belonging to the crew, and then distributed among the whole ship's company. So after all we got some supper, taking care

to add to our slices of pumpkin a little *meditation* upon oatmeal.

The night passed without accident. Every one slept profoundly, except the watchman charged to strike the hours upon the tam-tam, and the next morning at day-break, the crew were all in motion again. The wind had fallen very much, and, what was still better, it had changed its direction. We were, however, a long time in getting afloat again; for the junk had got so deep into the sand, that it was no easy matter to set her free. At last we got once more into the channel of the Blue River, and, with the wind behind us, dashed on in full sail towards the port of Kin-tcheou. We were all on deck, enjoying the freshness of the morning, and the pleasure of a smooth and rapid navigation, and contemplating the rich panorama that was unfolded before our eyes. All the faces that had been so sad and gloomy the evening before, were now radiant and saucy enough. Our Mandarins were once more convinced of the value of a life, which, when they were sea-sick, they were quite ready to part with. Master Ting was exulting to find himself still a member of this breathing world, and would have required very little pressing to act us a play. "Master Ting," said we, "you have, you see, escaped with your life, and you can move about quite well, so you must not forget to fulfil your promise: go and get your opium box, and let us pitch it overboard." He only replied by cutting a caper, saying he had only said that in fun; and to show how little disposed he was to throw his pipe into the water, he went down and began to smoke with more ardour than ever.

In the midst of this general enjoyment the master alone was still out of humour. That arrival in port

that we were all longing for, was precisely what he dreaded, for he feared to encounter the raillery of the other junks. "How shall I dare to show myself?" he kept repeating. "I have *lost my face* (that is, been dishonoured)." Vainly did we try to encourage him: to all we could say he had but one answer, "I have lost my face!"

At last we reached the port of Kin-tcheou, and as we entered, there arose a general sensation. All the junks got into motion, shouts were uttered, arms extended, the tam-tam sounded from every quarter! Our skipper could not stand this; it was evidently nothing but raillery and sarcasm. Very soon our junk was surrounded by little boats, and the most curious of their occupants began to climb on board, and then we learned the real cause of these lively demonstrations, which were by no means satirical, but cordially congratulative. They had believed us lost. The greater part of the junks that had made the point, which we had endeavoured in vain to pass, had suffered shipwreck on the other side, in the midst of a tremendous gale.

Those that had arrived in port were entirely dismantled; they had announced that we were coming, and as we had not appeared, every body was persuaded that we had been swallowed by the waves. The numerous misfortunes that they related to us, with many lamentable details, made us wonder at and bless the goodness of God towards us. It was indeed providential that we had run aground three times, for we had been thus prevented from reaching the point of danger. What we had regarded as a trial, was in truth a blessing of God, an evidence of his goodness and mercy. Whilst we were endeavouring to resign ourselves to what we

thought a disappointment, we ought to have been returning thanks for a signal benefit. In many events of life men commit the same mistake, and are deceived by false appearances. We often see them inconsiderately yielding themselves a prey to gloom and sadness, when they should calmly bless the perpetual watchfulness of Providence over them.

The joy that we felt at having so wonderfully escaped shipwreck was not, however, unmingled with grief. Our two transport boats that we had been so jealous of, because they had got before us, had been lost; the one had been wrecked upon the reefs that border the shore, the other had foundered and gone down, when quite near the port. Three men were drowned, two soldiers and the Head Secretary of the Prefect of Song-tche-hien. The others had been saved by the mariners of Kin-tcheou, who had hastened to their assistance on their little bamboo rafts.

After listening to these melancholy details, we made what haste we could to the Communal Palace, whither our poor shipwrecked men had been taken; and on entering the court-yard we saw a great display of clothes spread to dry in the sun, hung to doors and windows, or stretched upon cords. Our first care was to pay a visit to the proprietors of these garments. We found them lying on mats in the great hall, and wrapped in coverings that had been sent to them from the tribunal. When we entered they were as much astonished as if they had seen so many ghosts appear; no doubt they had supposed us drowned, and by this time thought no more of us. The irreproachable condition of our costume especially seemed to surprise them. Being dry from head to foot, we did not look at all like men who

came from the bottom of the Blue River; but a few words served to explain how very fortunate for us had been our vexations of the preceding evening. We visited all the men in succession, and did not find one dangerously ill; they were only much exhausted, and in need of repose.

What troubled them most was the loss of their little baggage. They had saved from the shipwreck nothing but the garments that were drying in the sun, not even their pipes, which had disappeared in the tempest. This loss, however, the authorities of Kin-tcheou had hastened to make good, by sending each of them a pipe and an abundant provision of tobacco immediately. A Chinese cannot remain long without smoking, more especially when he is in grief. We soothed our shipwrecked mariners by promising to endeavour to come to some arrangement with the Mandarin of the town by which their losses might be repaired before leaving Kin-tcheou.

But what could not be repaired was the death of the two soldiers, and of the Secretary. What a blow it would be for the good Prefect when he should learn this catastrophe! The thought that this kind old man would be made responsible for this fatal accident grieved us deeply. We knew the customs of the Chinese, and that this death would in all probability be the cause of much persecution to him. The relations of the Secretary would not fail to profit by the event, to demand enormous damages. We could fancy we saw them now, rushing to the tribunal with loud lamentations, tearing their hair, rending their garments, and demanding their relative with great outcries. It was evident that the Prefect of Song-tche-hien was in no way guilty of this

misfortune; nothing could be imputed to him, but no matter. The man had been in his service, he was responsible for him, he must restore him to his family. "He is dead," you may say; "the victim of an accident."

"We, his relations, know nothing about that," will be the reply. "He was at your house yesterday; to-day he has disappeared. You must restore him to us, you must answer for him, life for life; or, if you do not wish to have a law-suit commenced against you, and to be accused of homicide, let us come to some agreement." Such a circumstance is often enough to interrupt the career of a Mandarin, and ruin him completely.

Such is the way they manage these matters in China, if not always, at least very often, and this monstrous abuse proceeds, perhaps, from an excellent principle, which is the safeguard of the lives of many men. This principle is that of rigorous responsibility of the superior for the inferior; but at present the Chinese carry it to a vicious extreme, and, driven by their insatiable cupidity, they find means to pervert even the best institutions.

We could never find out what was the result of this affair. We hope, however, that the popularity enjoyed by the Prefect of Song-tche-hien, and possibly also the integrity of the Secretary's family, may have preserved him from much harassing. We should be grieved indeed to think that this most worthy and venerable Mandarin should have fallen into serious trouble in endeavouring to provide for our comfort.

CHAP. X.

CHINESE CITY IN A STATE OF SIEGE. — NAUTICAL SPORTS ON THE BLUE RIVER. — QUARREL BETWEEN VICTORS AND VANQUISHED. — CIVIL WAR AT KIN-TCHEOU. — GLANCE AT THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE CHINESE EMPIRE. — DISCOVERY OF TWO SOLDIERS IN THE RESIDENCE OF A MISSIONARY. — DESCRIPTION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY REVIEW OF TROOPS. — POLICY OF THE MANTCHOO DYNASTY WITH RESPECT TO SOLDIERS. — CHINESE NAVY. — CAUSE OF THE WANT OF BRAVERY IN THE CHINESE DURING THE LAST WAR WITH THE ENGLISH. — RESOURCES OF THE EMPIRE FOR THE FORMATION OF A GOOD ARMY AND A POWERFUL NAVY. — A GREAT REFORMER NEEDED. — DEPARTURE FROM KIN-TCHEOU. — ROUTE BY LAND. — GREAT HEAT. — JOURNEY DURING THE NIGHT BY TORCH AND LANTERN.

SINCE we had left the frontiers of Thibet, our passage through every Chinese town had been a kind of little event; the Mandarins and the people, every one we met, seemed anxious about the Europeans who had been to Lha-ssa; they crowded to see them, sometimes they even got up a little riot in their honour, and were sometimes so excited as to fail in respect to the authorities. Our arrival at Kin-tcheou, following that of a number of shipwrecked mariners, could not but excite still more the curiosity of the inhabitants of this great town; and the uproarious reception we had met with in the port induced us still more to expect a great sensation in the town. But we were quite mistaken; we passed unnoticed, and nobody seemed to trouble themselves about

us. The reason of this was, that Kin-tcheou was at the moment the scene of an important event that left little room for curiosity in the minds of the inhabitants. The town was, so to speak, in a state of siege, in consequence of a bloody battle that had taken place two days before, between the Chinese and the Mantchoo Tartars. When we entered, all was calm and gloomy. We traversed long streets that were silent and almost deserted; the shops were closed, or only half open, the few persons whom we met hurried along with rapid steps, sometimes forming little groups in which they spoke in a low voice, and with great animation. We saw that all minds were in a state of fermentation, everything seemed to breathe of civil war.

This conflict between the Chinese and the Tartars had had its origin in some nautical sports. It is customary in China, at certain seasons of the year, to have junk races, and for the towns near navigable rivers, and the sea-ports, this is an occasion of great rejoicing; the magistrates, and sometimes the rich merchants of the locality, distribute prizes to the victors; and those who wish to enter the lists organise themselves into a company, and appoint a chief. The junks that serve for these games are very long and narrow, so that there is only just room for two benches of rowers; they are mostly richly carved and ornamented with gilding and designs in bright colours. The prow and the poop represent the head and tail of the Imperial Dragon; they are therefore called *loung-tchouan*, that is to say, dragon boats. They are hung with silks and tinsel, and along their whole length are displayed numerous streamers; bright red pennants float in the wind: and on each side of the little mast that supports the national

flag are placed two men, who never leave off striking the tam-tam, and executing rolls on the drum, whilst the mariners, leaning over their oars, row on vigorously, and make the dragon junk skim rapidly along the surface of the waters.

Whilst these elegant boats are contending with one another, the people throng the quays, the shore, the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and the vessels that are lying in the port. They animate the rowers by their cries and plaudits; they let off fireworks; they perform at various points deafening music, in which the sonorous noise of the tam-tam, and the sharp sound of a sort of clarionet giving perpetually the same note, predominate over all the rest. The Chinese relish this infernal harmony.

It happens sometimes that a dragon boat is upset in a moment, and emptied of its double line of rowers; but the crowd greets the incident with a shout of laughter; nobody is at all disturbed, for the men who row are always good swimmers. You soon see them emerge from beneath the water, swimming about in all directions to catch their oars again, and their rattan helmets; the water springs up beneath their abrupt and rapid movements, you might take them for a troop of porpoises disporting in the middle of the waves. When every man has found his oar and his hat again, the dragon boat is placed once more on her keel, the streamers are put to rights as well as circumstances will permit, and then comes the grand difficulty of how to get into her again; but these people are so agile, adroit and supple, that they always manage it somehow. The public has often the satisfaction of witnessing these little accidents on fête days, for the boats are so frail

and light, that the slightest fault in the movements of the rowers may capsize them.

These nautical games last for several days together, and are continued from morning till night, the spectators remaining faithfully at their posts all the time. The ambulatory kitchens and the dealers' in provisions circulate through all parts of the crowd to feed this immense multitude, which, under pretext of having no regular meal at home that day, is eating and drinking continually, whilst rope dancers, jugglers, pickpockets, and thieves of every species, profit by the opportunity to turn their talents to account, and vary the amusements of the day. The official fête is terminated by the distribution of the prizes, and the rowers wind up with merrymaking, and sometimes also with quarrelling and fighting.

This had taken place at Kin-tcheou a few days before our arrival. As it is the most important garrison town of Hou-pé, the soldiers and sailors are there in great numbers. During the celebration of the last nautical games, the Chinese and Mantchoos had divided themselves into two camps, and had long disputed the prize for the dragon boats; but the Mantchoo Tartars had at last gained the victory, and this had been solemnly proclaimed with unaccustomed formalities by the principal Mandarins of the garrison, so that the vanity of the Chinese had been much wounded. Pieces of silk, jars of wine, roast and boiled pigs, and a certain sum of money, had been distributed to the victors, who divided among them the money and the silk, and then arranged an immense banquet for the consumption of the pigs and the wine.

In these banquets it is usual for the defeated party

to drink to the health of the conquerors, and the ceremony is gone through as it ought to be amongst good comrades; after these few cups of wine have been drunk in the prescribed manner, a fusion of the two parties is effected, and victors and vanquished take their places indiscriminately at the table. On this occasion, however, the Chinese, who had long borne ill will to the Tartars, drank to them with a very bad grace; there were even, it is said, injurious expressions uttered, and murmurs against the partiality of the judges of the nautical race. By degrees a quarrel arose, and the Tartars, excited by wine and the taunts of the Chinese, thought proper to remind their adversaries that they were the masters of China, and that the conquered owed respect and obedience to the conquering race. The battle then began, and some of the Chinese were soon stretched dead and horribly mangled on the ground. Immediately the agitation spread over the whole town; the Chinese rushed about tumultuously without knowing very well where they were going, but uttering frightful cries. Without having lived in the midst of such a population as this, it is scarcely possible to conceive the disorder and confusion that reign in a Chinese town in times of trouble.

Whilst the Chinese were vociferating and rushing about the streets of Kin-tcheou, the Tartars had taken refuge in their cantonments, called the Tartar town, where is the palace of the *kiang-kiun*, or commandant general of the military division of the province. This important post is always occupied by a Tartar. The Mantchoos concentrated themselves to the number, it is said, of 20,000, in the tribunal of their grand Mandarin,

and then they barricaded all the gates. The Chinese, persuaded that they were afraid of them, poured into the Tartar town, and surrounded the tribunal as if to besiege it. A general attack commenced, not indeed with murderous weapons, but with thousands of voices, furiously demanding to have delivered up to them a number of Mantchoos equal to the Chinese who had been killed, in order that they might revenge themselves upon them by killing and mutilating them at discretion. Whilst they were making these demands, which, horrible as they were, were nevertheless in accordance with Chinese custom, not a sound was heard from the interior of the tribunal, not one of the besieged was to be seen. The Chinese, more and more persuaded that they were become formidable to the Tartars, resolved to break open the gates. At the first attempt, however, the gates were abruptly flung back, and the Mantchoos rushed out, pouring a hail of balls and arrows over the unarmed multitude, and then throwing themselves upon them sword in hand. The rash assailants scoured nimbly back to their quarters, and hurried into their houses, not forgetting to shut the door; and doubtless not promising themselves to begin again tomorrow; but about thirty Chinese were left dead upon the spot, and the number of wounded was very considerable.

On the two following days there was no new collision, for every one prudently remained at home; but the still and lugubrious aspect the town presented when we entered it, denoted that the public mind was still a prey to great anxiety, and that under this apparent calm were brooding irreconcilable antipathy and hatred. Immediately after the murderous affair that had taken

place at the gates of the Tartar tribunal, the military commandant and the Prefect of the town had each sent off despatches to Pekin, in which the events were doubtless represented in a very different manner. A decision was now expected from the capital, and it was generally supposed that the Chinese would be reprimanded, the Mantchoo general recalled, but only to be sent to a better post, and that then the matter would be allowed to drop.

It may be conceived that in such circumstances, it would have been an easy thing for the Chinese of Kintcheou to exterminate this handful of Mantchoos. It was only necessary to surround them, and drive them in one upon another to suffocate them. After the first charge that took place at the gate of the tribunal, if that innumerable multitude had not run away, the Mantchoos would have been lost, but, as we have already remarked, the Chinese are unorganised, without chiefs, and therefore without strength or courage. There is no one to communicate an impulse to the whole body; every one has to give it to himself, and it consequently has reference only to his private interest, and never to that of the public.

The government maintains in some of the most important towns of each province of the Empire a garrison composed in great part of Mantchoo soldiers, under the command of a great military Mandarin, who belongs also to this nation. His power cannot be controlled by any civil functionary, not even by the Viceroy of the province. He corresponds directly with the Emperor, and it is to him alone he is responsible for his administration. This body of troops remains entirely separate from the population in every town where they are

stationed, and the quarter they inhabit bears the name of the Tartar town.

With the exception of these bands of Tartar soldiers in some of the towns, you may traverse the provinces in every direction without being sensible of the presence of the Mantchoo element in the population. You see only Chinese, who are entirely absorbed in the interests of commerce, industry, and agriculture, whilst the foreign soldiers are guarding the frontiers, and watching over the public tranquillity. The Tartars really seem, in fact, less like a conquering people than an auxiliary tribe that has obtained by its valour and its victories the privilege of mounting guard in the Empire. The administrative influence has remained with the Chinese; it is they who fill the greatest number of civil offices; and if they have been conquered by the Mantchoos, they have imposed on their conquerors their language, their manners, their civilisation, and, in a great measure, their customs.

Having but recently issued from the forests and steppes, where they led a nomadic life, maintaining themselves by their flocks and the chase, the Tartars could not but yield to the influence of the celebrated country into which they had opened for themselves a way, partly by valour, but still more by stratagem and perfidy. They were willing to leave the details of government to the Chinese, since they had taste, talent, and experience for them; but they have always taken good care to retain in their own hands the direction of the land and sea forces. The administration of the War Department has always remained exclusively in the hands of the Tartars.

It is impossible to make even an approximate calcu-

lation of the strength of the Chinese army in ordinary times, for of course we cannot speak of its actual state, which must have undergone most important modifications during the progress of the present formidable insurrection. According to the official Almanack, the total number of troops maintained by the Emperor amounts to no less than one million two hundred and thirty-two thousand Chinese, Mantchoos or Mongols, quartered in the interior of the Empire, as well as thirty-one thousand sailors. Such a figure as this is evidently too high, and a mere calculation of the Chinese Almanack. We traversed China in all directions for several years, and could not help asking ourselves where was this mighty army, of which we nowhere saw any signs? China is doubtless a vast country, its population greater than that of all Europe put together; yet if the soldiers were as numerous as they are said to be, it would still be possible to see something of them. Now, with the exception of the towns already mentioned, where there are some organised and stationary troops, we never saw any but the militia necessary for the service of the tribunals. M. Tembowski, who in 1821 conducted a Russian embassy to Pekin, collected the most exact information possible concerning the effective force of the Chinese army; and the total amount he gives is that of 740,900 men, including Chinese, Mantchoos and Mongols. It is probable that this statement is much nearer the truth, at least as far as relates to the number of soldiers registered as belonging to the army; but it by no means follows that there are in China actually seven hundred thousand men on active military service. We believe that even this number must be reduced two thirds, if we wish to get

at the number of men who really follow the trade of arms.

We have ourselves lived long enough in Tartary to become acquainted with what are called the Mongol troops; they are composed of nomadic shepherds, who pass their lives in keeping their flocks, and never trouble themselves about military exercises. They have indeed in their tents a long matchlock, and sometimes a bow and arrows, but they make use of them only to kill yellow goats and pheasants. If they have a lance, they never touch it, but to run after the wolves that make war upon their flocks of sheep; for this Mongol division of the Imperial army consists of families of shepherds, including infirm old men and infants at the breast; they are all counted in, as every male is born a soldier, and begins immediately on his birth to receive his pay.

The Chinese troops are almost as fictitious as the Mongols. Their number is estimated at five hundred thousand men, but they are composed chiefly of artisans and labourers living in the midst of their families, and occupying themselves quite at their ease with the cultivation of their fields, or with working at their trade, without appearing to suspect the least in the world that they belong to the class of warriors. From time to time, they have to put on what passes for a uniform when they are summoned to a general review, or required to go and root out gangs of thieves. But apart from these rare occasions, when also they can generally find a substitute for a few sapecks, they are left in perfect tranquillity at home. As, however, they are all counted as soldiers, and the Emperor has the right to convoke them in case of war, they receive annually a small sum, very insufficient though for them

to live upon, if they did not add to it the produce of their daily toil.

In certain localities, regarded as the strong places in the Empire, all the inhabitants are enrolled in this manner.

During the last year of our former abode in China, we were once charged with the care of a little Mission in a southern province. There was a chapel to celebrate the holy mysteries, and assemble the neophytes in the hours of prayer and religious instruction; near the chapel a small house with a garden, the whole surrounded by great trees, a high flint wall and thickets of bamboo. We lived in this retreat with two Chinese, one about thirty years old, the other nearly twice that age. The first bore the title of Catechist; he assisted us in the functions of the holy ministry, overlooked our small house-keeping, and instructed the Christian children and the catechumens in the manner of chanting the public prayers. In his moments of leisure, which were not a few, he occupied himself with sewing, for in fact he was by trade a tailor. He was a very worthy fellow, of gentle, quiet manners, uttering very few unnecessary words, and only rather too fond of medicine and medical books. This mania had come to him because, from seeing himself always pale, meagre and miserable-looking, he thought he must be ill, and that he would like to doctor himself, and had consequently plunged into the study of medicine.

The elder Chinese had no official title in the Mission; but he looked after a great many things concerning the cleanliness and good order of the chapel and the presbytery, and the digging and watering of the garden, where he succeeded more or less in raising a few flowers

and vegetables. He was also our cook, when there was anything to be cooked, and he had besides the self-imposed duty of holding long conversations with all who came to our abode, and his generosity in offering tea and tobacco made him very popular. He had formerly been a smith, and since his new functions were not very well defined we had continued to call him Siao, the smith.

One day these two companions of our solitude presented themselves in our chamber with a certain air of solemnity, to ask our advice. An inspector extraordinary had, it appeared, arrived from Pekin, and there was shortly to be a general review. What the old smith and the tailor wanted to know, was whether they should go to it. "That must depend upon yourselves," replied we; "if you think it will amuse you, and that you like to go, we will keep the house. We do not care to see the show; we saw quite enough of those things in the north of the Empire."

"We have never been there yet," said the catechist; "we have always been able to get off easily; but they say the new inspector is strict in requiring every one to come. Everybody that does not will be put down, and then condemned to 500 strokes of the rattan and a heavy fine."

We thought this inspector must be the most extraordinary man we had ever heard of, to require everybody to come and see his review under pain of 500 strokes of the rattan and a heavy fine.

"Why, if that be the case," said we, "we must go too."

"Our Spiritual Father may go to see it if he pleases,

but we soldiers of the Emperor are bound to be present."

"You soldiers!" we exclaimed, contemplating our two Christians from head to foot. We thought we must have misunderstood them, and that they had said "subjects of the Emperor;" but not at all, they were really soldiers, and had been for a long time. For more than two years that we had known them we had never had the smallest suspicion of the fact, though this does little credit to our sagacity; for when there had been any reviews, exercises, or forced labour, they had been in the habit of going away, and leaving as their substitutes any persons they happened to meet with. Our catechist confessed to me, nevertheless, that he had never touched a gun in his life, and that he should be afraid to do so. He did not think he should have courage to fire off a cracker.

Being now sufficiently enlightened as to the true social position of these two functionaries of the Mission, we told them that as they bore the title of soldiers and received the pay they must fulfil the duties, at least on extraordinary occasions; that the threat of the rattan and the fine was an unequivocal proof of the will of the Emperor on the subject; and that, as Christians, they were specially bound to set a good example of obedience and patriotism. It was then agreed that they should go where honour called, and on our side we determined to be present at a display which promised to be so magnificent.

The appointed day having come, our two veterans of the Imperial Army took, at an early hour, a very solid breakfast, and emptied a large jug of hot wine to keep up their spirits. After this they set about dis-

guising themselves as soldiers. This did not take long. They had but to substitute for their little black caps a straw hat of a conical shape, with a tuft of red silk at the top, and to put on over their ordinary clothes a black tunic with a broad red border. This tunic had, before and behind, an escutcheon of white linen, upon which was drawn, very large, the character *ping*, meaning soldier. The precaution was by no means a useless one, for without such a ticket one might easily have made a mistake. This little tailor, for instance, with his pallid face, feeble diminutive body, and tearful looking eyes, always modestly cast down, had not such a decidedly martial aspect that there was no mistaking him; but now when you looked either at his breast or his back there was the inscription, as plain as possible, "this is a soldier," and you knew what he was meant for.

When their costume was quite complete, our two heroes took, the one a gun and the other a bow, and set off for the field of Mars. The very moment they were gone we locked our street door, and set off after them to see what was to be seen.

This great military display was to take place outside the town in an immense sandy plain, to which the warriors were already hastening in little groups, accoutred in various ways according to the banner they belonged to; their arms, which did *not* trouble themselves to gleam in the sun, were also in great variety; there were guns, bows, pikes, sabres, pitchforks, and saws fastened to the end of a long handle, as well as rattans, shields, and iron culverins, which had for a carriage the shoulders of two individuals. In the midst of this medley there was, nevertheless, one thing in which the army dis-

played the most admirable uniformity. Every man without exception had a pipe and a fan. As to the umbrella that did not seem to be strictly according to regulation, for those who carried umbrellas also were in a minority.

At one extremity of the field there was raised, on a slight elevation of the ground, a platform shaded by an immense red parasol and ornamented with banners, streamers, and some large lanterns that did not seem particularly necessary, as the sun was shining in full splendour; but perhaps they were intended to be symbolical, and to signify to the soldiers that they were in the presence of enlightened judges.

The Inspector Extraordinary of the Imperial Army, and the principal civil and military Mandarins of the town, were on the platform, seated in arm-chairs before little tables covered with tea things and boxes filled with excellent tobacco. In one corner was a servant holding a lighted match, not, however, to fire cannon with, but to light pipes; and at various points of the field we saw formidable detached forts made of bamboo and painted paper. The moment arrived to begin. A little culverin that stood near the platform was fired off, the military judges covering their ears with their hands to protect them from the frightful detonation; then a yellow flag was hoisted to the top of one of the forts, the tam-tams sounded a furious charge, and the soldiers rushed together pell-mell, uttering terrible cries and grouping themselves round the flag of their company; then they seemed to be trying to get into some sort of order, in which they were not very successful, and after that they had a mimic fight, and the melée, which was certainly the most effective, soon followed. It is impos-

sible to imagine anything more whimsical and comic than the evolutions of the Chinese soldiers; they advance, draw back, leap, pirouette, cut capers, crouch behind their shields, as if to watch the enemy, then jump up again, distribute blows right and left, and then run away with all their might, crying "Victory! victory!"

One would really take them for an army of mountebanks, every one of which was playing tricks in his own fashion. We saw many soldiers who did nothing whatever but run sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other, probably because they did not know very well what to do else; and we could not get it out of our heads that our two Christian warriors belonged to this class.

All the time the battle lasted two officers, placed at each extremity of the platform, were continually shaking a standard, and indicating by the greater or less rapidity of their movements the degree of heat of the action. Whenever the flags stopped the combatants stopped too, and then every one returned to his post, or somewhere near it, for they are not too exact in these matters.

After the grand battle there were manœuvres of certain chosen companies, who appeared tolerably well exercised, though even their evolutions had an extremely whimsical character.

The English artillery must have had easy work with enemies whose chief skill consists in cutting capers and balancing themselves a long time on one leg in the manner of the Hindoo penitents. Afterwards the fusiliers and archers went through their exercise in a very creditable manner.

The Chinese muskets have no stock; they have

merely a handle like a pistol, and when you fire you do not rest the weapon against the shoulder; you hold it on the right side about the height of the hip, and before drawing the trigger, which contains a lighted match, you content yourself with fixing your eyes well on the object you mean to aim at. We have remarked that this method was very successful, which would go to prove, perhaps, that it is less necessary to keep your eye on the end of your weapon than on the mark you wish to hit, exactly as you would do in throwing a stone.

The most amusing thing in the whole review was unquestionably the firing with the small culverins. We have said that these pieces have no carriages; they are borne solemnly by two soldiers, having each an end of the culverin leant on his left shoulder, and keeping it in its place with his right hand. Nothing can be imagined more comic than the faces of these poor fellows when the machine was to be fired. They took pride in showing a magnanimous serenity on the occasion, and it was easy to see that they were making immense efforts to be quite at their ease; but the position was critical, and the muscles of their faces would take such unaccustomed forms that they produced the most astounding grimaces. The Imperial Government in its paternal solicitude for these poor human gun-carriages orders that, before the firing, their ears shall be carefully stuffed with cotton; and, although at considerable distance, it was easy for us to see that on this occasion the injunction had been liberally obeyed; but under these circumstances it may be imagined that it is not very easy to take aim correctly, and the Chinese seldom trouble themselves with attempting it. The ball goes

where it likes, but during these exercises the artillerists were prudent enough to fire with powder only.

In the wars in Tartary, or any other countries where there are camels, it appears that these quadrupeds are made to form a battery, by placing the culverins between their humps. In a series of pictures representing the campaigns of the Emperor Khang-hi in the country of the Oeleuts, we saw many of these camel batteries; and it may be supposed from this specimen of management, how much difficulty European troops are likely to experience in a war with the Chinese. The review ended with a general attack on the forts, which it is impossible for us to give an account of, as we understood absolutely nothing of the proceedings. All we know is, that long and unimaginable evolutions were performed, and that at several periods a most deafening clamour was raised. At length the banners ceased to be shaken, the judges on the platform rose shouting "victory!" the whole army repeated the acclamation three times, and one of our neighbours, who doubtless understood what had taken place, informed us that all the forts without exception had been carried with astonishing intrepidity.

We returned to our residence, to which our two heroes, covered with dust, sweat, and glory, speedily followed us. We questioned them a good deal about the military exercises they had been performing with so much success; but they could give us no very precise information; they could not even tell what part they had themselves played in all this brilliant affair; and, according to them, two-thirds of the soldiers were not better informed than themselves. They had merely followed and imitated the movements of a few select

companies. It is evident, therefore, that a pretty considerable reduction may be made from the force of 500,000 men composing what is called the Chinese division of the army.

The number of Mantchoo troops is estimated at 60,000 men. These soldiers, we believe, are habitually under arms, and are assiduous in their profession. The government watches over them with great anxiety, for the Emperor has a strong interest in not allowing these troops to stagnate in inaction; he takes care that they shall preserve at least something of the warlike character to which they owe their conquest of the Empire. They are treated, it is said, with considerable severity, the smallest infraction of rules or neglect of duty is rigorously punished, whilst the Chinese or Mongol troops are left nearly to do as they like. It is not improbable that the reigning dynasty favours, up to a certain point, the ignorance and inactivity of the Chinese and Mongols, in order to preserve the relative superiority of the Mantchoos, and to retain an easy means of defence in case of sedition or revolt. If the 500,000 Chinese soldiers were trained to the management of arms and military discipline as well as the Mantchoos, a moment would suffice to sweep the conquering race from the Chinese soil.*

The navy of the Chinese Empire is about on a level with its land forces; it is composed of [redacted] sailors, distributed over a considerable number [redacted] junks. These vessels, very high in the prow and poop, of a rude construction, and rigged with [redacted] matting, are very difficult to manœuvre, and incapable

* We did not think it right to alter any of these remarks, which were written before the Chinese insurrection.

of undertaking long voyages. They merely, indeed, run along the coasts, and up and down the great rivers, to chase the pirates, who appear to have very little fear of them. The forms of the war junks, and especially of those found in the interior of the Empire, are very various. It is to be observed, that, with some few exceptions, the Blue River has always been the principal theatre of the naval battles sustained by the Chinese. At the time when the Empire was divided into two, these battles were very numerous.

The names borne by these junks seem sometimes intended to give an idea of their form; thus the Centipede is the name of one with three rows of oars, representing the numerous feet of that hideous insect; the Hawk's Beak has the two extremities equally curved, and each provided with a helm, so that they can move backwards or forwards without going about. The Four-Wheeled junk has two wheels at the prow and two at the stern, which are turned by two men with a crank. These wheeled vessels are said to be of great antiquity, and there only needed the application of steam power to give this ingenious people ages ago the discovery of Fulton.

The whimsicality of the paintings with which they are decorated is another peculiarity of these junks. An attempt is mostly made to give them the aspect of a fish, a reptile, or a bird. Generally there are two enormous eyes [redacted] the prow, charged doubtless with the duty of looking fierce to frighten the enemy. All these monstrosities, however, are not so surprising to a stranger, as the disorder and confusion that reigns on board. You find several different households assembled in them, and not unfrequently on the deck

little houses, absolutely built of masonry. European sailors admire nevertheless one idea in the construction of these vessels, that of dividing the bottom into various water-tight compartments, so that a leak can never occasion more than partial damage. It is, perhaps, because this method has been found efficacious, that it has not been thought necessary to have pumps on board.

The military government of each province, placed like the civil under the direction of the viceroy, has the command of both land and sea forces. In general the Chinese make very little difference between the services, and the various ranks in each have the same names. The generals are called *ti-tou;* they are sixteen in number, and two belong exclusively to the sea service. These superior officers have each their head-quarters, where they assemble the greater part of their brigade, and distribute the rest in the various places under their command. There are besides, as we have remarked, many fortified places occupied by Tartar troops, and commanded by a Tartar *kiang-kiun*, who obeys only the Emperor. The admirals, *ti-tou*, and the vice-admirals, *tsoung-ping*, reside habitually on shore, and leave the command to inferior officers. The ranks of the military Mandarins correspond to the civil, and are equally conferred in accordance with the result of examinations which candidates have to undergo, either in the provinces or at Pekin, and which are varied with the importance of the degree; thus there are Bachelors and Doctors *in War* as well as Bachelors and Doctors of Letters. The aspirants to the military degrees are examined on certain books of tactics, and also especially on their ability to draw the bow, mount

on horseback, raise and throw enormous stones, scale walls, perform feats of strength, and execute a great number of gymnastic exercises, invented to delude and terrify the enemy. Literature is nevertheless not entirely excluded from these examinations; Bachelors of War are required to be able to explain the classical books, and produce some little literary composition.

From what we have said, some idea may be formed of the Chinese army. There do not perhaps exist in the world more wretched troops, worse equipped, more undisciplined, more insensible to honour, in a word, more completely absurd; they may be able to crush bands of robbers, or the hordes of Turkestan; but they have proved in the last war with the English that they are quite incapable of resisting European soldiers, even in the proportion of fifty to one.

This complete nullity of the Chinese army depends on many causes, of which the principal are the long peace the Empire has enjoyed, — a peace that may be said to have now lasted for several centuries, since the petty wars in which it has been engaged have been insufficient to revive the warlike spirit, — the policy of the Mantchoo dynasty, which seeks to perpetuate in the Chinese the feebleness that prevents them from shaking off its yoke, — the obstinacy of the government in refusing to admit any reform in the tactics and weapons of ancient times; and, finally, the discredit that for some time past has been thrown on the military profession. A soldier is, according to the Chinese expression, an *antisapeck* man, that is, a man of no value, — a man whose worth cannot be represented by the smallest coin. A military Mandarin is nobody

by the side of a civil officer, and can only act according to the impulse given to him; he is the representative of force — of brute matter, a machine that must be guided by the superior intelligence of the literary man.

These causes, however, are adventitious, and we by no means believe that the Chinese are radically incapable of making good soldiers. They are capable, certainly, of much self-devotion and courage. Their annals are as full of traits of heroism as those of the Greeks, the Romans, or any other of the most warlike races. In going through the history of their long revolutions and their intestine wars, you are often struck with admiration at seeing whole populations, men, women, and even children, supporting with heroic fortitude all the horrors of a siege, and defending the walls of their cities to the last extremity. How often have the recitals of these grand struggles brought us back to modern times, reminding us of the sublime defence of Saragossa, and of the famous Russian who had the stern and terrible courage to reduce Moscow to ashes to save his country. In the first period of the Mantchoo dynasty the Chinese had the patriotism and resolution to lay waste their own coasts as far as twenty leagues up the country, and destroy villages and cities, burn woods and corn fields, in fact to create an immense desert, in order to annihilate the power of a formidable pirate, who for a long time had held in check the whole strength of the Empire.

There has been much joking about the manner in which the Chinese soldiers behaved before the English troops. After firing their pieces once, they threw them down, and fled as a flock of sheep might do if a bomb should burst in the midst of them; and it was thence

inferred that the Chinese were men essentially cowardly, deficient in energy, and incapable of fighting; but this judgment appears to us over hasty. In these circumstances the Chinese soldiers simply showed their good sense. The means of destruction employed by the two parties were so entirely disproportioned, that there could be no room for the display of valour. On one side arrows and matchlocks, on the other good muskets, and cannon loaded with grape. When a maritime town was to be destroyed, it was the simplest thing in the world. An English frigate had only to heave-to at the proper distance, and then, while the officers, seated quietly at dinner on the poop-deck, manœuvred the champagne and madeira, the sailors methodically bombarded the town, which with its wretched cannon could only send a few balls about half way to the enemy's vessel, while their houses and public buildings came tumbling down on all sides as if struck by lightning. The English artillery was for these poor people so terrible, so supernatural a thing, that they at last believed they had to do with beings more than mortal. How could they be expected to be brave in so unequal a contest? An enemy whom they had no means of reaching, was blazing away at them quite at his ease; what could they do but run away? They did so, and in our opinion they showed their wisdom in so doing. The government alone was to blame, for driving thousands of men almost unarmed and defenceless to a certain and useless death. The English troops are assuredly very brave, but if ever, which God forbid, they should have to defend their country against a European army with nothing better than bows and arrows, and matchlocks taken from the Chinese, they

would soon, we are convinced, find some of their valour oozing away.

It may be that it would be possible to find in China all the elements necessary for organising the most formidable army in the world. The Chinese are intelligent, ingenious, and docile. They comprehend rapidly whatever they are taught, and retain it in their memory. They are persevering, and astonishingly active when they choose to exert themselves, respectful to authority, submissive and obedient, and they would easily accommodate themselves to all the exigencies of the severest discipline.

The Chinese possess also a quality most precious in soldiers, and which can scarcely be found as well developed among any other people, namely an incomparable facility at supporting privations of every kind.

We have often been astonished to see how they will bear hunger, thirst, heat, cold, the difficulties and fatigues of a long march, as if it were mere play. Thus, both morally and physically, they seem capable of meeting every demand; and with respect to numbers they might be enrolled by millions.

The equipment of this immense army would also be no very hard matter. There would be no occasion to have recourse to foreign nations. Their own country would furnish in abundance all the material that could be desired, as well as workmen without number, quick at comprehending any new invention.

China would present also inexhaustible resources for a navy. Without speaking of the vast extent of her coasts, along which the numerous population pass the greater part of their lives on the sea, the great rivers and immense lakes in the interior, always covered with

fishing and trading junks, might furnish multitudes of men, habituated from their infancy to navigation, nimble, experienced, and capable of becoming excellent sailors for long expeditions. The officers of our ships of war that have visited the Chinese seas have often been astonished to meet, far away from any coast, their fishermen braving the tempests, and guiding their miserable vessels in safety over enormous waves that threatened every moment to swallow them. The Chinese would very soon be able to build vessels on the model of those of Europe, and a few years would enable them to put to sea with such a fleet as has never been seen.

No doubt the reader will think the notion of this immense army, this avalanche of men descending from the high table-land of Asia, as in the time of Tchinggis Khan, these innumerable Chinese vessels ploughing all seas, and coming even to blockade our ports, an exceedingly fantastic one, and we ourselves are certainly far from thinking it likely to be realised. But when you become thoroughly acquainted with this empire of 300 millions of inhabitants, when you know what are the resources in soil and population of these rich and fertile countries, you cannot but ask what should prevent such a nation from exercising great influence over the affairs of the human race. What it wants is a man of genius, a man truly great, capable of assimilating the power and vitality of this nation, more populous than all Europe, and which counts more than thirty centuries of civilisation. Should an Emperor arise among them possessed of a great intellect, a will of iron, a reformer determined to come at once to a rupture with the ancient traditions, and initiate his people into the progressive civilisation of the West, we believe that the work of regeneration would

proceed with rapid strides, and that perhaps those Chinese who now appear such a very ridiculous people, might be thought of somewhat more seriously, and might even occasion mortal uneasiness to those who covet so eagerly the spoils of the ancient nations of Asia.

The young Mantchoo prince who in 1850 ascended the imperial throne will probably not be the great and powerful reformer of whom we have spoken. He commenced his reign by degrading and putting to death the statesmen who, during that of his predecessor, had seen themselves compelled, under the English cannon, to make some concessions to the Europeans. The high dignitaries who form his council have been chosen among the most obstinate partisans of the old *régime*, and the ancient traditions; and in place of the tolerant sentiments manifested by those who opened the five ports, have come all the old traditional antipathies. Every device has been tried to elude the obligation of treaties; under the influence of the new policy, the relations between the Consuls and the Mandarins have become embittered, and the concessions of the late Emperor almost illusory.

It is evident to the least clear-sighted, that the object of the Mantchoo government is to disgust Europeans, and break off all intercourse with them; it would gladly have nothing to do with them at any price. China has, however, now been brought too near to Europe for it to be permitted any longer to lead this isolated life in the midst of the world; and if the Tartar dynasty does not itself take the initiative in a change of policy, it will be forced to it, sooner or later, by its contact with the Western nations, or perhaps by the insurrection that has broken out in the southern

provinces, and which, as it has been making the most rapid progress, may any day become a social revolution, and produce a complete change in the aspect of affairs throughout the empire. Our sojourn in the town of Kin-tcheou, after the riots originating in the nautical games, proved to us that the Mantchoos are anything but popular, and that the Chinese would ask nothing better than an opportunity of shaking them off.

We stopped two days at Kin-tcheou, to afford our shipwrecked men time for rest, and for restoring, as well as they could, their lost equipments. With the authorities of the town we had only the most indispensable intercourse. As their attention was entirely occupied by the serious events that had taken place, we did not wish to disturb them; but we succeeded in inducing them to indemnify the people of our escort, who had lost their baggage in the Blue River; and they did so with such unexpected generosity, that the men found themselves richer than they had been before.

Our last voyage had been so unfortunate that no one had the least wish to make another attempt of the kind; even Master Ting himself thought it prudent to restrain his accumulative ardour; he seemed to doubt whether the profits he should realise would compensate him for the twofold danger of drowning and sea-sickness, and to consider that small and sure gains on dry land were, on the whole, a better thing. The Mandarins of Kin-tcheou, also, would have scarcely been willing we should embark, for fear of falling into the same trouble as the Prefect of Song-tche-hien. We ourselves, though we had found travelling by water rather less fatiguing than by land, were persuaded that the dangers and inconveniences were pretty equally balanced. We agreed to continue

our journey, either in a boat or a palanquin, as Master Ting thought proper, and the final decision was for the palanquin.

We left the town of Kin-tcheou in much the same state as we had found it on our arrival:—its commercial movement was not yet restored; the shops remained half closed, and the small number of inhabitants we met in the streets looked full of distress and discontent. This sullen and gloomy expression did not, however, extend beyond the limits of the town. Outside the walls we found the Chinese as gay, alert, and busy as usual; in the country every one was going about his work, seeming to care very little about the quarrel of the nautical games, and all nature looked smiling and gracious, as if to make us forget the sad and anxious aspect of the town; the flowers, still glittering with dew, were expanding in the first rays of the sun: the birds were frolicking among the leaves, or, perched upon a branch apart, were greeting each other with delicious melody. All along the road we met groups of little Chinese children, with large straw hats, leading goats, asses, or enormous buffaloes, to feed on the grass that grew in the ditches. You could hear the prattling of the little creatures quite far off, and see them capering and jumping, some trying to climb on the backs of the buffaloes, and seat themselves astride there, others teasing the animal, to induce him to throw off the little successful cavalier, without at all troubling themselves with the quarrels of the Mantchoo and Tartar races. When our palanquins came up, they assumed a grave modest attitude and preserved a perfect silence; but it was easy to see arch and mischievous glances through all their demure looks, and as soon as ever we had passed, they

resumed their gambols, even more noisily than before. After our disagreeable adventures on the Blue River, and the two days passed in a town still agitated by civil discord, the aspect of the beautiful country, always delightful enough, seemed really to do us good, and the sweetness and serenity of the air to pass into our thoughts.

This pleasant state of mind did not, however, last longer than the expansion of the flowers of the field. What a strange mixture of energy and weakness is the heart of man! If it requires little to elevate and strengthen it, a breath also is sufficient to cast it down. The sight of the country, and the delightful freshness of the morning, had seemed to give us new life; yet as soon as the heat of the sun, and the weight of the atmosphere, had bowed down the plants and withered the flowers, we also fell into dejection. By degrees, as the air and the earth became heated, the breeze that had been blowing in the morning died away, and towards noon was entirely gone, and we seemed to be actually breathing fire. Even the Chinese, accustomed as they are to these terrible heats, were almost suffocated. From time to time we went to rest in the shade of large trees that we came to at the road-side; but, wherever we went, we found ourselves in a furnace, and even in the shade there was scarcely a perceptible difference.

This frightful day was followed by a night still more fatiguing, except that the weather had somewhat cooled; for we were tormented incessantly by swarms of mosquitoes, which turned our hours of rest into hours of torture.

We were now in a flat, damp, marshy country, where these abominable insects increase and multiply in an incredible manner; and as they too dread the great

heats, they go in the middle of the day to take refuge among the grass at the borders of water, or in the darkest recesses of woods; but when the night comes, they issue from their lair, wrathful and hungry, and throw themselves with fury on their unhappy victims. It is impossible to protect one's-self from them, for they can insinuate themselves into the smallest openings, and the mosquito net soon becomes loaded with them. Those who have ever had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with these creatures will know what it is to pass a night in their company. There was every sign that this weather would last for several days, and we felt so incapable of continuing the journey in such a season, that we resolved to stop at the first convenient station, and allow this tremendous heat to pass before proceeding farther. We were on the point of announcing that plan to our conductors, when our servant was inspired with a grand idea.

"It seems to me," said he, "that for several days past you have not been very comfortable."

"You are right, Wei-chan," we replied; "we are suffering very much. Our strength is quite exhausted."

"Who can doubt it? When one has great fatigue in the day, and no rest at night, where should the strength come from? This is the season at which the rays of the sun and the stings of mosquitoes are most terrible; but we might easily protect ourselves from both one and the other."

"Do you really think we could find any way to manage that?"

"Yes; and a very simple one; one that the mosquitoes themselves have taught me. These insects sleep in the day and travel at night. Why should n't we do

so too? By that means, we should avoid both the sun and the mosquitoes." The idea seemed excellent.

"Capital!" said we; "why you are quite a man of resources. Your advice is as wise as it is simple, and you shall see that this very evening we will put it in practice."

The moment when Wei-chan received this sudden illumination was, perhaps, the hottest of the day, and we were seated in the vestibule of the little pagoda of a village. We had made the half of our day's journey, and were resting a little before going on; while the peasants of the place hastened to bring us provisions, and to profit by our passage to earn a few sapecks. Whilst we were seeking to extinguish the fire that consumed us by swallowing great cups of tea, and chewing pieces of sugar-cane, our Mandarins were refreshing themselves with smoking opium, in a narrow cell belonging to a Bonze. The soldiers and the palanquin bearers, stretched at the road side, were sleeping soundly under the burning rays of the sun; and our servant was alone with us, under the shadow of the broad roofed pagoda, when he communicated his admirable plan.

As soon as we reached the station where we were to pass the night, we communicated our project to Ting, and to the first magistrate of the place. At first, of course, it met with opposition. It was a very bad thing to travel after twilight—it was quite unusual—it was turning night into day, and day into night, &c. They could not help seeing that there were great advantages in the innovation; but what would people think? What would people say? All that we could allege went for nothing against this powerful argument.

We bethought ourselves, however, of a very simple method of bringing the magistrate over to our side, which was to say very gravely that since we found it impossible to travel in the middle of the day in this summer heat, we should, if we did not travel at night, have to wait for the cooler days of autumn; but we gave him at the same time to understand, that we came from a country where it was the custom to travel by night more than by day, and we did not at all like having to break through our established customs. This argument was found sufficient, and an *estafette* was immediately mounted and sent off, to give notice along the road that in future we should do the stages by night.

Many people in Europe imagine in the Chinese character the calmness and gravity of the philosopher, but we have always found in it, on the contrary, the lightness and versatility of the child. Thus in the present case, the people of our escort had appeared generally repugnant to our new plan of travelling; but no sooner was our determination taken, and it was settled that we should begin this very evening, when everybody was full of impatience. Mandarins and soldiers laughed, sung, frolicked, and promised themselves infinite pleasure. They would hardly give themselves time to take their evening meal, or make the necessary preparations; every moment they came to tell us it was dark, and to ask whether we should not set off. Master Ting burst abruptly into the room into which we had retired to say our prayers, and throwing down at our feet, with great noise, a bundle of pieces of wood that he had been carrying on his shoulders, exclaimed, "There! there's a fine collection of torches

of resinous wood to light us on our way;" and as he spoke, he fairly jumped about with joy, like a little child. We pointed out to him, however, that he was disturbing us, and then he took up his bundle again and went away.

At last, towards ten o'clock in the evening, we quitted the Communal Palace. As we passed through the streets of the town, our manner of travelling did not seem at all extraordinary. The Chinese streets are so well lighted up with lanterns of all sizes, shapes, and colours, that the little illumination we carried with us became mingled with the other numerous lights by which our eyes were almost dazzled. When we got out into the country, however, we could contemplate at our ease our own splendour, without being distracted by the lanterns of the public, and the varied and fantastic spectacle that was displayed all along the road delighted us for a long time.

The horsemen who led the march were furnished with large torches that cast a red light with abundance of smoke; then came the foot passengers, each with his own lantern, of peculiar form and dimension, and the palanquins were also illuminated by four red lanterns suspended to the four corners of their canopy. All these lights, rising and sinking with the inequalities of the ground, crossing each other in all directions, according to the movements of the travellers, presented such an amusing spectacle that we never noticed the length of the way: and the gleaming lights from our grand illumination, falling on and partially lighting up farms, and corn-fields, and trees, and every object on the road, produced the most singular and striking effects. All the caravan was in the

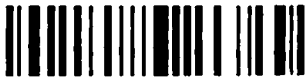
highest spirits; they sung, they joked, they amused themselves with letting off crackers, and firing rockets into the air, for in China there is no such thing as happiness without fireworks. Our servant Wei-chan was, as it was fair he should be, the happiest of the whole band. He came from time to time frisking about our palanquin, and we never failed to give him what he was looking for, repeated compliments on his happy discovery.

Never, in fact, had we seen a journey performed with more pleasure, and, besides the perpetual amusement of the spectacle, we rejoiced in a tolerably pleasant temperature; the night was not very cool, but at least it was possible to breathe. Towards one o'clock in the morning we saw advancing towards us an illumination a good deal resembling our own, except the resinous torches; and presently the two became mingled and confounded with one another. We had reached a little town where we were to stop to dine, and the magistrate of the place, who was expecting us, had sent all the lantern-bearers of his tribunal to increase our escort. The matter had been so well arranged that there was not a moment's delay. We found the dinner quite ready: every one had an excellent appetite, and after having saluted the functionaries who had come to bear us company, we resumed our nocturnal peregrinations.

We arrived at the next stage before sun-rise, and as soon as we were installed in the Communal Palace, we received the visits of the Mandarins, and then, without troubling ourselves to ask what o'clock it was, we supped in a manner that might not have led any one to suppose we had dined very well at one o'clock in the morning.

The time having come, at which, as we were told, the mosquitoes are in the habit of going to bed, we prepared to go to bed also, and the observation of Wei-chan proved to be extremely accurate, for these redoubtable insects, after having vagabondised all night, have, doubtless, need of repose; and they allowed us to sleep soundly and peaceably till the end of the day. We continued to follow this new plan of travelling, and found ourselves all the better for it; but our strength had been so completely exhausted by the long duration of our fatigues, that at Kuen-kang-hien, a town of the third order, we fell seriously ill, and were compelled to interrupt our journey.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.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on 15 June, 2016